



9 GAME DEMO DISC - ALL PLAYABLE
INCLUDING ADIDAS POWER SOCCER '98, WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER & THREE LIONS



Official UK
PlayStation™
Football Special

FOOTBALL SPECIAL 1998 £5.99



**The BEST football games
in the world EVER!**

LEARN TO FIGHT THE 'DEAD OR ALIVE' WAY!

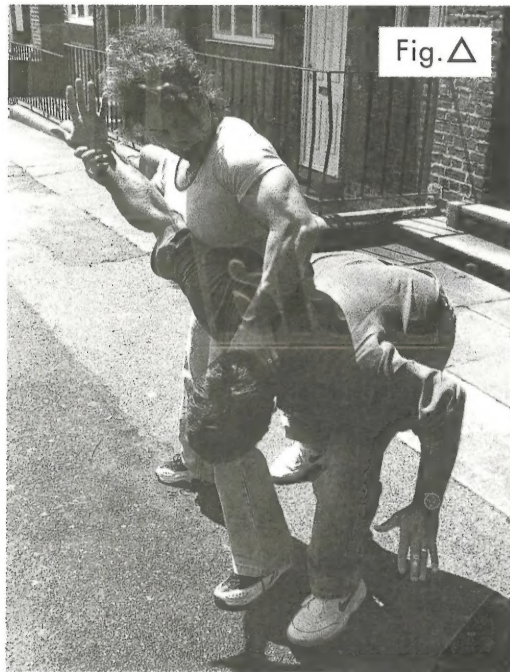


Fig. Δ

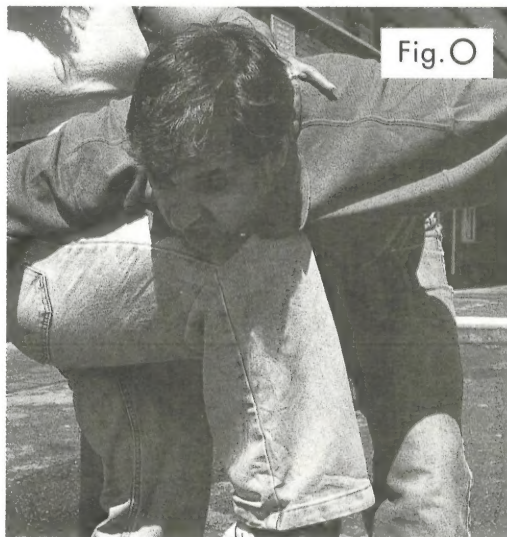


Fig. ○



Fig. X



Fig. □

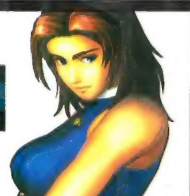
- Fig. Δ I find the best way to deal with trouble is to *start* it.
- Fig. ○ This is one of my favourites, I call it the *Short Range Lariat*.
- Fig. X A swift pivot kick into the danger area and—*voilà!*
- Fig. □ *Observe*. One brained baddie spilled out on a tarmac grave.



TECMO

DEAD OR ALIVE

COMPATIBLE
DUAL SHOCK



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DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION





IT KICKS OFF HERE

Recently, the *Official PlayStation Magazine* (that's us) conducted a survey that confirmed what we already knew. Nearly two thirds of PlayStation owners in the UK play at least one football game, and by the current reckoning that's nearly 1.5 million people. Which is still only a tiny fraction of the billions who enjoy the most popular sport the world has ever known, either as a spectator or a participant, like the bloke on the left.

You are one of these people, and as a result you're holding a magazine dealing with the collision between the Beautiful Game and the Video Game. Good for you.

We asked *Total Football*, The Ultimate Fan's Magazine, to give us the ultimate fan's preview of the forthcoming season, and you'll find the results on page 102.

We, on the other hand, stuck to our own area of expertise, and the result is a hard but fair review of every PlayStation football game available in Britain today. You'll also find cheats for most of them and coverage of all the titles you'll be playing in the next 12 months, and the personalities behind them.

Oh, and enjoy the CD won't you?

Will Groves, Editor

Father forgive me. It's two seasons since my last confession.

I deliberately pulled a certain player's shirt in a game last season.

Then in another game, I shoved a player when the ref wasn't looking.

In a big home game, I swore at the linesman.

Then in the same game I swore at the referee... twice. Or was it three times.

Actually I think I may have sworn at the referee in the next game as well.

Oh, and in another match, I threw a punch at this player... but I did get sent off for that one.

Another time I kicked a player, I got away with it, so I kicked him again.

In the next game I had a run in with a striker that got a bit out of hand.

Oh... and in training last week I had a go at one of my team mates.

At half time, I had a little scuffle in the tunnel.

And I keep having these terrible thoughts about what I'm going to do to this certain player next time I play against him.

I keep having this overwhelming





**NOT GOING
ANYWHERE
FOR
A WHILE?**

GRAB A



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Hungry? Why wait?

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Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St,
Bath, Somerset BA1 2BW
Telephone: 01225 442244
Fax: 01225 732291
E-mail: PSM@futurenet.co.uk

Subscriptions

Future Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST
BS4900, Somerton, Somerset TA117BR
Telephone: 01458 271126

The PSM team

Editor: **Will Groves**
Writer: **Andrew Collins**
Art editor: **Bradley Merritt**
Photography: **Martin Burton, Pete Loretz, Alan Sheldon**
Contributors: **Steve Bradley, Andy Dyer, Simon Kirrane, Steve McGill, Dave Perret, James Price, Gus Hurdle**
Publisher: **David Roberts**
Publishing director: **Jane Ingham**
Managing director: **Greg Ingham**

Production coordinator: **Emma Muddimer**
Group production manager: **Judith Green**
Overseas licensing: **Chris Power**
Overseas tel: **+44 (0) 1225 442244**
Public relations: **Liz Lowe**
Public relations tel: **0171 331 3920**
Group advertising manager: **Simon Moss**
Advertising manager: **Anne Green**
Senior sales executive: **Kelly Jenkins**
Classified sales: **John Massey**
Advertising fax: **01225 480325**
Business development manager: **Paul Lanzerotti**
Marketing manager: **Gill Stevenson**

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The BEST football games in the world EVER!



Premier League Preview



Scottish Premier Preview



Actua 3

98/99 PREVIEW

We teamed up with *Total Football* magazine to bring you a bumper crop of news and views on the coming season.

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A run down of all the clubs in the Premiership.

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PREPLAY

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Everyone has a favourite footy title and they cover quite a range, but there was a time when only one game was king, can *Sensible* regain the title?

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The Official UK PlayStation Magazine is dedicated to bringing its readers the most up-to-date information on all aspects of PlayStation gaming. Close links with Sony Computer Entertainment give us exclusive access to the very latest software and news, plus the coveted official demo CD which graces the magazine every month. Our game reviews are the most in-depth, honest and authoritative in the market, offering independent, unbiased buying advice. PSM: the biggest-selling videogames magazine in the UK.



Viva Football



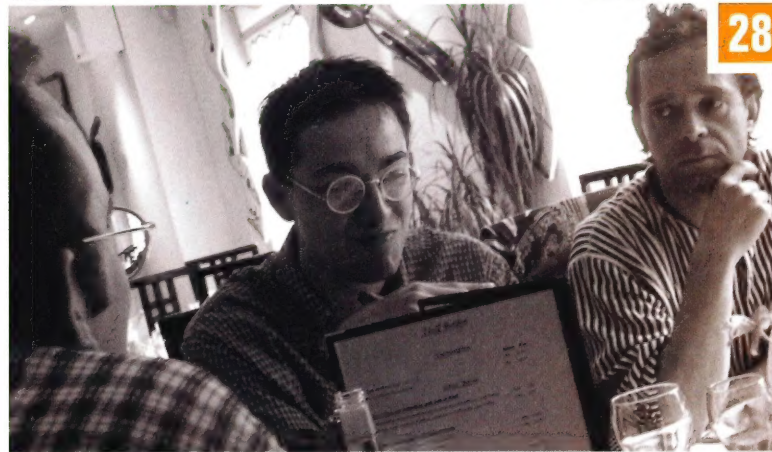
ISS Pro '98



World Cup '98



Three Lions



Football Forum



Bruce bonus



ISS Pro



Fifa Soccer '96

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Top '70s sports bag sponsor.			

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On the CD



Since we started PSM we've been

fortunate to feature some fantastic

football demos. After compiling

them all onto one cracking disc we

thought we'd round off this treat by

giving you the chance to win a set

of the top four football games by

entering our Football Challenge..

Problems with your CD?

Pack up your troublesome coverdisc in an envelope and send it back to PSM at the usual address. We will test it and, if it is faulty, we'll send you another CD.

Actua Soccer

■ PLAYERS: Two

■ PRICE: £19.99

■ AVAILABILITY: Platinum

Actua Soccer was a very impressive PlayStation debut for the Sheffield codeshop. Things in the world of PlayStation football had started badly with the likes of *Onside Soccer* souring the scene but then we thought we'd be okay with the release of *FIFA Soccer '96* and we all know what went wrong there don't we? When the game arrived it was pure pleasure to play, everything seems so intuitive, and just listen to the commentary from the wonderful Barry 'he who lives by the dive, may one day find that the swimming pool is empty' Davies. *Actua Soccer* looks good and plays a mean game of football.

The match you're cordially invited to join is a USA vs Russia fixture, with you representing the wonderful Uncle Sam. It's only a single player game and lasts a short but wonderfully involving 150 seconds. Commentator Barry is pleased with the weather and the pitch so just go out there, give 110 per cent and enjoy yourself.

■ Controls

D-pad for moving the players

ⓧ **Pass**

⓪ **Shoot/slide tackle**

Ⓢ **Speed burst**

ⓐ **Toggle Player**

Ⓛ/Ⓡ **Rotate the player in certain set pieces**

Ⓛ/Ⓡ **Change the camera**

Ⓢ **Pause the action**

Ⓢ **In-game**

■ Additional Features

A host of international teams, camera angles by Sky Sports and a surprising depth to the gameplay. All the major world teams are present alongside some less likely candidates. You can also customise all the options and the rules i.e. if you

❶ This has to be one of the most impressive stadiums we've ever seen. ❷ The game can be played from a number of viewpoints but this is the best of the lot.



don't like the offside rule just switch it off and play as much long ball as you can tolerate.

■ The Reviews

Actua Soccer was reviewed way back in the early days of PlayStation when PSM was but three issues old. At the time it was by far and away the best football game you could get on the PlayStation but software has come on a lot in three years. Then again, if you're after a really cracking game of football and have 20 quid burning a hole in your pocket it's not a bad Platinum purchase at all. It might even be worth a scout around a car boot sale.



❶ Use the scanner to keep an eye on where your players are. ❷ Every game starts with the teams facing one another and growling.

Actua Soccer 2



[1] There are some fine treats to try out, the Gremlin team is great. [2] Wonder if Italy would have fared any better with this old feller leading the attack?

■ PLAYERS: **Two**

■ PRICE: £29.99

■ AVAILABILITY: High Street

While the first *Actua Soccer* looked the business when first released, it was soon began to look a little bit dated so Gremlin set to work totally rewriting the graphics engine to give the sequel some of the best football graphics outside of an arcade game. Featuring the silky motion-captured skills of Alan Shearer, Michael Owen and Simon Tracey (come on, you must have heard of him!) the animation is a real treat, making the runs of the players that bit more realistic as they dart around the screen.

The development team have made sure everything looks the part; for a perfect example of this just take a look at the replays.

Our demo consists of the old faithful match, England vs Scotland. Both teams are playable and the demo supports two players so you can take on your mates. Be warned though, it doesn't last very long so make the most of your chances.

■ Controls
D-pad Move the players

With possession

⊗ Pass

Ⓐ **Long pass**

© **Speed burst**

Ⓚ(hold down) Shoot

ⓧⓧ(double tap) **One-two**

④ + ⑤ **Chip the ball**

④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ ⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯ ⑰ ⑱ ⑲ ⑳ ㉑ ㉒ ㉓ ㉔ ㉕ ㉖ ㉗ ㉘ ㉙ ㉚ ㉛ ㉜ ㉝ ㉞ ㉟ ㊱ ㊲ ㊳ ㊴ ㊵ ㊶ ㊷ ㊸ ㊹ ㊺ ㊻ ㊼ ㊽ ㊾ ㊿

Without Possession

⊗ First time control move

☒ First time strike at the ball

Ⓐ **Sliding tackle**

© **Speed Burst**

■ Additional Features

Contrary to a lot of reports *Actua Soccer 2* only features international teams – the developers wanted to include all the UK's football leagues but it proved to be incredibly impractical so the decision was made to plump for international squads. If this looks like being a bar to buying then it's handy to remember that there is a customisable league with 20 places for all the teams you want – just enter the players' names and design a kit and you're away. Aside from this thorny issue there is a whole series of tournaments, friendlies and leagues for you to compete in.

■ The Reviews

Just a few scant months ago *PSM* said that *Actua Soccer 2* was more than worthy of a score of nine out of ten. Now, with the 15 quid reduction this score couldn't be more valid.

This is a wonderful football game which really deserves to be in every football fans' collection.



(1) If you look close enough he really does look like John Collins. (2) The replays let you watch the games from the most impressive views. (3) And here's another. (4) You'll soon be able to chest the ball down and slam it in the net.

On the CD

adidas Power Soccer '98



1 Set peices are the strongest part of the game. **2,3** The distant view is the easiest to play. **4** The character animation is very impressive.



the first rendered intro to feature massive drug taking.

The demo features a battle of wits between Scotland and Brazil. Here's one tip to make the game that little bit easier... choose Brazil.

■ Controls

With the ball

- ⊗ Short Pass
- ⊙ Long Pass
- ⊙ Shoot
- ⊙ Ride a tackle

Without the ball

- ⊙ Head the ball
- ⊙ Chest the ball
- ⊗ Moderate tackle
- ⊙ Two-footed tackle o'death

■ PLAYERS: Two

■ PRICE: £44.99

■ AVAILABILITY: High Street

After the brilliance of the original games a lot was expected of this, the third game in the *Adidas Power Soccer* series. Alas, we were all rather let down with lacklustre gameplay and graphics. If you're looking for a silver lining try the commentary from Brian 'I've completely lost the plot' Moore or

■ Additional Information

If there's one thing that can be said for the game, it must be that it's by far the most comprehensive football game we've ever come across, featuring some teams even the most clued in members of our team had never heard of.

■ The Reviews

Turn to page 90 for a spot on review of Psygnosis' latest football fare. Be prepared; it's not a pretty sight.

adidas Power Soccer International '97

■ PLAYERS: Two

■ PRICE: £29.99

■ AVAILABILITY: High Street

When the first *adidas Power Soccer* was released there was a dearth of decent football software with only *Actua Soccer* able to fill the breach. Offering a highly irreverent look at the football game *APSI '97* offered a range of special moves from the goal-bound Predator Kick to the bone-crunching, neck-breaking challenges.

■ Controls

- ⊙ Skip - Use this to avoid incoming tackles when you're in possession of the ball.
- ⊙ Shoot - Don't be afraid to try this from some way out.
- ⊙ Short Pass - Tap the ball to pass in the direction you're facing.
- ⊗ Long Pass/Tackle - If you're in



1 With defending like this, it's easy to score bucketloads. **2** Always keep an eye on the bottom left to see which buttons you need to press.

possession, this will hoof the ball up field; if not, it'll tackle whoever's nearest to you.

■ Additional Features

Aside from new teams and a new lick of paint there is very little to distinguish this from the original game. If this sounds okay you might like to know there are loads of exhibition matches, loads of tournaments and some great

fouls to keep your interest. But remember the original is now on Platinum.

■ The Reviews

Like *OPM* said all those months ago, don't buy this if you've got the original *APS* as all it is a simple remix of the first game. It was originally awarded an eight but looking at it now we couldn't give it more than a five - see page 98.

Power Soccer 2



Don't worry!
These programs are
pre-production
versions of finished
games. If they
crash or hang-out,
simply reset
your PlayStation
and reload.

[1] The game never lets you forget what's going on - for the short-sighted among you Shearer has just scored. [2] Again, set pieces are the best part of the game; it's the best chance to score.

PLAYERS: Two
PRICE: £39.99
AVAILABILITY: High Street

Last year was a fine old year for football sims but for those of you who prefer their games a little more rough and ready there was really only one game of choice... *adidas Power Soccer*. Since then things in the videogame world have come on a little so Psygnosis decided to chuck in a new version of the game known, *sans* licence, as *Power Soccer 2*.

The demo pits the (ahem) mighty England as they take on the rather tasty French. Be warned, the demo is hard to get to grips with. A good tip is to keep a man as far up field as possible then cross the ball into the penalty area as the goalies have a habit of dropping the ball.

Controls
D-pad Control the player
With the ball
ⓧ Short Pass

⓪ Long Pass
⓪ Shoot
ⓐ Ride a tackle

Without the ball
ⓐ Head the ball
⓪ Chest the ball
ⓧ Moderate tackle
⓪ Two-footed tackle o'death

Additional Features
The complete game features more than 50 teams, eight national stadiums and the vocal talents of Brian Moore. Just tell us if he makes any comment on the game at all - we only ever heard him witter on about the state of the stadium or the availability of tickets. Which wasn't very encouraging to say the least.

The Reviews
It was awarded a respectable seven out of ten when it was reviewed back in issue 29 of *PSM*. Looking back this seems a little generous so we knocked a couple of marks off the score. So it now swaggers into the football game saloon packing a dinky, Saturday Night Special of a score: five.

World League Soccer



[1] The players move with a smoothness rarely seen in a PSX football game. [2] Just a quick tap of the Square button will send the ball flying goalwards.

PLAYERS: Two
PRICE: £39.99
AVAILABILITY: High Street

When *World League Soccer* first turned up at last September's European Computer Show opinions were divided as to how impressive it would be. In the end it turned into a rather smart soccer sim. Offering lightning fast gameplay in the same mould of previous Silicon Dream-developed football titles, *WLS* is one of the smoothest games on the market and well worth a look.

The demo allows you to play the

first game of the World Cup, Scotland vs Brazil. Now, we all know this would hardly be fair for the player who's forced to pick Scotland so the developers, Silicon Dreams have cleverly included a system to level up the abilities making for much more equal action. Keep an eye on the clock though because the whole game only lasts for one half - so make those chances count, 110% and all that guffins.

Controls
With the ball
⓪ Kick/Header
⓪ Pass/Tackle
ⓧ Shoot/Volley
ⓐ Thru Ball/Overhead Kick

⓪ Sprint
⓪ Cross

Without the ball
⓪ Header
⓪ Tackle
ⓧ Volley
ⓐ Overhead Kick
⓪ Sprint
⓪ Cross

Additional Features
WLS features an incredible range of leagues from the giants of England to the minnows of Japan. Along with the huge variety of teams there are tons of game modes to try out from the nice 'n' quick exhibition to the life-swallowing league mode. Unfortunately the game doesn't have the modern prerequisite of an official licence so it features some rather silly player names instead of the real ones. If this really gets on your wick it is possible to cheat and add the proper names. Have a peek at the review if you want to know more.

The Reviews
We had a good gander at *World League Soccer* over on page 78 where it was awarded seven out of ten. It certainly is one of the leading lights of the current football scene.

On the CD

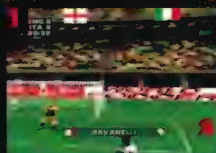
Three Lions

PLAYERS: Two
PRICE: £44.99
AVAILABILITY: High Street

Could you possibly need any more info about this game? The first of the new breed of football games, *Three Lions* has received a crazily mixed bag of reviews, taking in scores from the middle of the spectrum all the way up to the highest echelons of critical acclaim. From the off it was destined to succeed, it being the Official England Team game and all. It has 70



Three Lions features licences from some of the biggest players in World football. As if this isn't enough they've included all their particular goal celebrations.



What's he doing in the Italian team? Well, it says his name but where is he? Ah, there he is!

real international teams, and 1,750 named and rated players. Impressive statistics aren't they?

The main difference here is the system used for shooting. Rather than just using the standard hit and hope method *Three Lions* uses a fancy bull's eye targeting system. You can actually aim where you want the player to smack the ball. Of course, your chances of scoring depend on who you're controlling – Shearer is more likely to ruffle the net than Ferdinand. One tip. When you take aim go for the goalie's legs as it's your best chance of scoring – some say it's your only chance, the goalies are very, very good.

The demo consists of a battle between the old *Three Lions* themselves and Italy.

Controls
D-pad Moves the players
⊙ Tackle/Shoot
⊗ Switch player/Pass
⊙ Lob

⊙ + D-pad
Creates one-touch passing

Additional features
During a one-touch-pass routine, you can alter the targeted player by pressing the triangle button. Double-tap the X button and you'll pass to a player who'll remain stationary. You can then run on and, by pressing X, engineer a show stealing one-two.

The Reviews
If you want to see a spot-on review of the Take 2 title turn to page 66. The game plays well but we couldn't get close to scoring a goal, except through getting penalties – which isn't representative of the English is it?

Striker '96

PLAYERS: Two
PRICE: £29.99
AVAILABILITY: Bargain Bins

England vs Argentina, Sky Sport's Scot Andy Gray commenting, a fabulous stadium – and you're pitched into the first half of the match proudly sporting three lions upon your chest. Yes, we know that the game has been out for a very long time but it's probably been lost in the middle of all the *FIFA*'s and the *Actua*'s so it might be worth a look to see if its cartoony style of play is your bag.

Rage have kindly given you the chance to change strategy and formation, adjust the camera angle and gaze upon replay. You should have a great deal of fun with this. And you have to admit that the animation is lovely, well, you don't have to but you might as well because it's the truth – so stop being so obtuse.

Controls
⊗ Shoot/Slide
⊙ Punt/Block tackle
⊙ Pass to Player
⊙ Mad tackle
⊙ Options

Additional Features
There's a wonderful indoor seven-a-side game tucked away in the complete package. This might not sound like a lot but when you get a mate round it's a great little game. Oh, and there's just about every international team worth thinking about, too.

The Reviews
When we first looked at it we gave it a decent six out of ten (*PSM 2*) but then there were very few football games. Now, well, it's a nice little game but there are a lot of better games out there to get hold of. If you like look of the game after playing the demo you should be able to find a cheap copy hanging about in the bargain bins.



For some reason the goal looks far too small, perhaps it's on hard.

Kick Off World

PLAYERS: Two

PRICE: £39.99

AVAILABILITY: High Street

Can there possibly be any more room for another football game? Well, yes – it's more short blokes chasing glory and fame, but most of the time simply chasing a pig's bladder round a field. What this title offers above and beyond others is a clever assimilation of the management and 3D arcade sub-genres. It's literally a game of two halves. And the demo is a perfect example of this; the World choice offers you a game of arcadey football against the computer or a mate, while the Club invites you to venture into the murky, brown paper bag world of football management. In other words you can either take to the field and get seriously sweaty, or sit around in the dug-out wearing a sheepskin coat and a ridiculous pair of shades. For the football fan who wants to influence more than just the direction of the ball, *Kick Off World* could be worth a try.

Controls

- Arcade game
- ⊗ Change player
- ⊙ Short kick
- ⊕ Long kick
- ⊖ Goal kick/Shoot/Throw in

Management game
D-pad Highlight action
⊗ Perform action

Additional Features

An interesting feature of the finished version is the ability to predict, watch or even play in crucial games, and needless to say, there are more features in the finished title.

The Reviews

For a better look at the game and how well it did when we gave it our stout looking over turn to page 82.



(1) The replays follow the same system as *Actua Soccer 2* with the wonderful red lines. **(2)** So long as you want one of the Premiership teams you'll be fine. **(3)** You can choose classic, over-head view or the up-to-date 3D engine version you see here.



CHALLENGE THE BEST THEN WIN THE BEST

'What! Play a demo to win loads of footie games, and that's all?' we hear you cry. Yup, we've got together with the lads at Eidos, Psygnosis, Gremlin and Take 2 to compile a rather simple competition and give away set of four top football titles along with some assorted tat we've got hanging around the office. Instead of just sending us a few simple questions (which most of you would get wrong anyway) we want you to work for your prize so we've set you a challenge.

There are three stages to it. The first one is simple enough. We want to see just how quickly you can score a goal from kick off.

Next, we want you to see just how many goals you can score in one game. This has to be against the computer, no plugging a second pad in a pretending there's another player. For the final test we want to know how many players you can get sent off in one game. All very interesting we think you'll agree.

Remember you've got to perform these on the demo version of one of these four games if you want to stand any chance of winning. Also, we'd prefer some sort of evidence so if you could send us a photo of each of the challenges that would be great. If you can't send us a nice picture or a video we'll still

accept your entry but it will be treated with slightly less import than the confirmed entries. And don't even think about cheating, we've spoken to all the developers of the demo's and know exactly what are the best scores you can get so don't even try and cheat. - we're watching you. When you reckon you've got the best scores possible send them in to us at 'Demo Disc Challenge', PlayStation Football Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. And make sure you're entries are in before 1 September otherwise we'll chuck 'em in the bin. Oh, and no photo's or vids can be returned. Sorry.



LOADING

1% COMPLETE



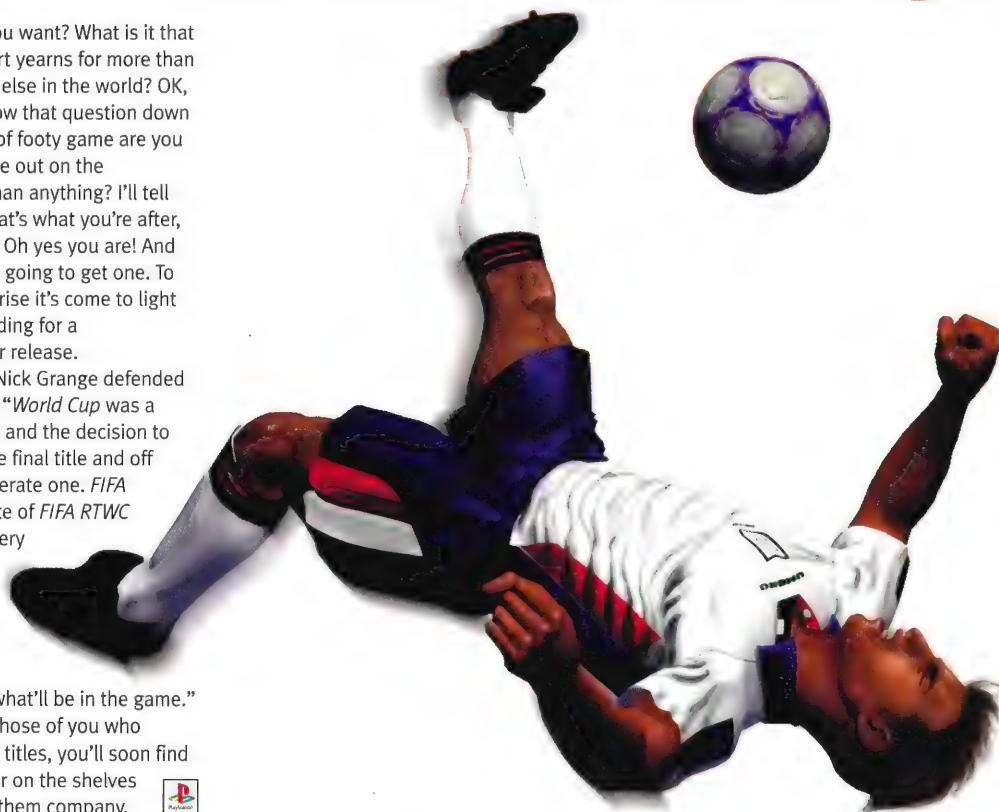
FIFA 99

FIFA Fever to set kick in... again

What do you want? What is it that your heart yearns for more than anything else in the world? OK, let's narrow that question down a little... what kind of footy game are you yearning for to come out on the PlayStation more than anything? I'll tell you what... *FIFA*. That's what you're after, another *FIFA* game. Oh yes you are! And what's more, you're going to get one. To no-one's great surprise it's come to light that *FIFA '99* is heading for a Christmas/new year release.

EA spokesman Nick Grange defended the release, stating "*World Cup* was a standalone product and the decision to leave *FIFA* out of the final title and off the box was a deliberate one. *FIFA '99* will be an update of *FIFA RTWC '98*, the same as every year. We haven't even seen the specs yet, so it's too early to give you any firm details of what'll be in the game."

So don't worry those of you who bought the last two titles, you'll soon find that there is another on the shelves that wants to keep them company.



RONALDO!

Sports Software Battle Led By Boy Wonder



European heavyweights Infogrames have been all out for football. They have had a Westminster Palace licence for some time now but haven't made any moves as yet to exploit it, they are also gearing up to exploit their UEFA licence, but the biggest news and biggest deal they have so far brokered on the footy front is getting Brazilian ace Ronaldo to sign on the dotted line in a joint license with his those all-powerful sponsors Nike. The deal, which is expected to mean five to seven Ronaldo titles in the next three years, will involve 'direct' input from the guilty genius, though whether that will mean motion-capture is as yet undecided, though everyone agrees that the idea of a motion-capture of the ball in one of his trademark fast and stoppy runs will make any game as much more appealing.

The license and early game specifications are set to be revealed in greater detail at the European Computer Trade show in September to coincide with a new Infogrames sports brand launch. Sports lines have become one of the biggest money-spinners in recent times after being the sole domain of software giants EA and their highly successful stable. Many companies are eating away at this, with Brit Soft companies such as CodeMasters and Empire entering the fray along with Gremlin, whose sports line has been licensed to entertainment behemoth Fox in the States. The direct attack from Infogrames, who bought licence specialists Ocean earlier this year, is the greatest so far and could spell all manner of trouble for EA.



Pssst!

Rumours milled, little tattled, whispers heard, gossip spread...

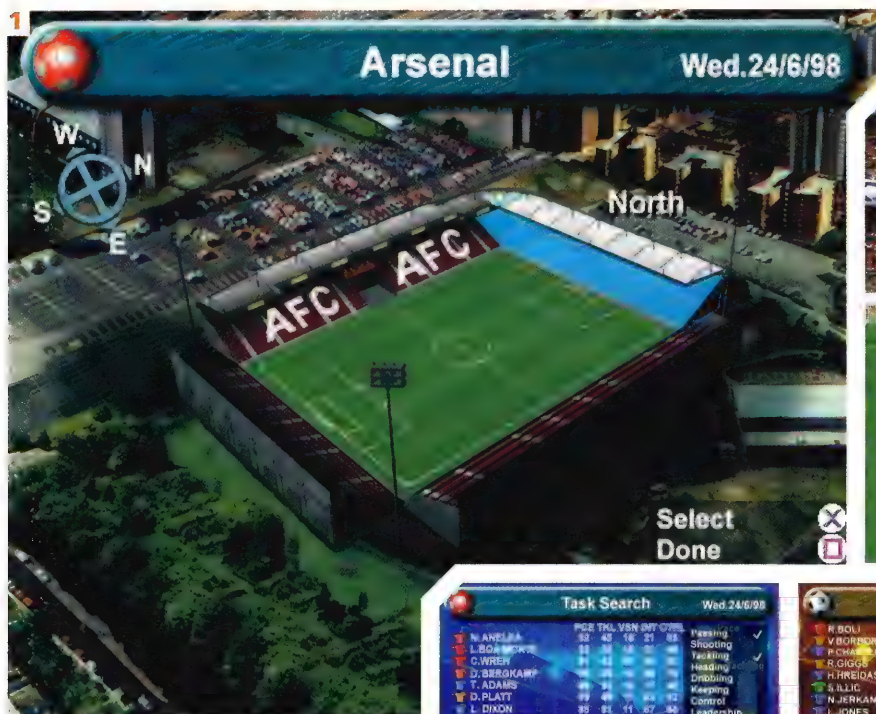
- After a respectable response to *World League Soccer*, Eidos have ordered developers Silicon Dreams back into the studio to start work on the sequel. From what we've heard, and details are scarce at the moment, the game will be displayed in beautiful hi-res mode with the gameplay and control mechanism undergoing a solid tweak. More details when we get them.

- News has reached Pssst of the latest licensed effort from Infogrames, *Puma Soccer*. With the focus of the action squarely on six-a-side games, the action takes place in such settings as airports, car parks and beaches. The German coders are hoping to get the profiles of some of the greatest players ever seen in there so expect to see the likes of Maradona and Van Basten. The game should be out in Autumn if you believe what Infogrames tell us.

- In their ever-intensifying campaign to buy up the whole industry Infogrames have just announced plans to launch the world's first videogames TV channel in association with Canal +. If the thought of 14 hours a day of broadcasting solely about Infogrames games scares you senseless don't worry as they've promised to feature other companies games too. Bloody good job too. Satellite owners should keep their eyes peeled from next month.

- Yet another Infogrames story. Having set their serfs hard at work on the new Ronaldo game and UEFA Championship (which sources say should now feature the vocal talents of Alan Hansen and Alan Green), the French giants have started work on a huge management sim. Let's see if *Soccer '99* gives *Premier Manager '98* a run for its money.

LOADING 13% COMPLETE



(1-2) It looks as though any ground improvements are actually reflected in the in-game graphics, and temporarily reduce your capacity and cash earning power. (3, 4-5) The sort of scouting screens that send certain people into seizures.

Task Search Wed 24/6/98

	PGE	TOL	SH	HT	CTL	Passing	Shooting
N. ANELKA	52	45	18	21	85	✓	✓
L. BOA MORTE	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
C. WREH	51	41	18	21	85	✓	✓
D. BERGKAMP	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
T. ADAMS	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
D. PLATT	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
L. DIXON	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
N. WINTERBURN	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
I. WRIGHT	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
M. OVERMARS	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
A. MENDEZ	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
M. JUPSON	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
J. CROWE	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
S. MARSHALL	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
P. VIEIRA	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
R. PARLOUR	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓

Clear Help Sort

Player Search Wed 24/6/98

	PGE	TOL	SH	HT	CTL	Passing	Shooting
R. BOU	52	45	18	21	85	✓	✓
V. BORDOIS	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
P. CHAMBERS	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
R. GIGGS	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
R. HRELIASSON	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
S. LALIC	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
N. JERKAN	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
L. JONES	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
V. JONES	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
S. L. SAUX	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
S. MCKINLEY	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
P. PESCHOLD	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
T. ROBBINS	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
S. SELLARS	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
T. CRUTT	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
P. VAN HOOIJONK	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓

Sort Shortlist Compare Help Custom Search Buy Loan Restore

Task Search Wed 24/6/98

	PGE	TOL	SH	HT	CTL	Passing	Shooting
N. ANELKA	52	45	18	21	85	✓	✓
L. BOA MORTE	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
C. WREH	51	41	18	21	85	✓	✓
D. BERGKAMP	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
T. ADAMS	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
D. PLATT	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
L. DIXON	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
N. WINTERBURN	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
I. WRIGHT	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
M. OVERMARS	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
A. MENDEZ	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
M. JUPSON	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
J. CROWE	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
S. MARSHALL	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
P. VIEIRA	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓
R. PARLOUR	55	48	18	21	85	✓	✓

Clear Help Sort

PLAYER MANAGER 2

ANCO ENTER PRE-SEASON TRAINING

Anco, veterans of the football management sim (they started 10 years ago on the Amiga and ST) are set to release a new and updated version of *Player Manager* for the 98/99 season to keep budding Wenger-worriers happy. Out in November the game includes many of the new signings and transfers made this summer and also boasts a new 3D engine.

As you'd expect, the game promises to be packed full of stats – there are 18 relating to prowess and skills, besides your day-to-day ones such as Fitness, and Morale. And, to keep things mentally manageable, you can select five stats, set up their relative importance and select the best for a given position, making the task all the more wieldy.

The transfer features and loan market are all in place with a handy player search to bring up results in double quick time. If

(1) A good transfer negotiation system can make or break a management game. A lack of one broke *Player Manager 1*, for instance. (2, 3) You've landed your player but where does he fit into the squad?

1 R. Parlour

Midfielder	Arsenal	25	English
West Ham			
2,835,500			
Offer 2,835M			
Price 3.5M			
Sell On Clause 20% of sell on price			

2 Select to player agreement. Sales 2

3 Options Menus Save Help

CONTROL
D. PLATT
L. DIXON
N. WINTERBURN
I. WRIGHT
D. BERGKAMP
P. VIEIRA
M. OVERMARS
M. JUPSON
A. MENDEZ
C. WREH
N. ANELKA
J. CROWE
L. BOA MORTE
R. PARLOUR
T. ADAMS
S. MARSHALL

Sort Help

2 Arsenal Wed 24/6/98

STATS	TACTICAL SEARCH	Sort	Help
T. D. SEAMAN			
T. L. DIXON			
T. N. WINTERBURN			
T. P. VIEIRA			
T. M. KEOWN			
T. T. ADAMS			
T. M. OVERMARS			
T. E. PETIT			
T. N. ANELKA			
T. D. BERGKAMP			
T. R. PARLOUR			
T. A. MANNING			
T. O. GRIMANDI			
T. S. HUGHES			
T. D. PLATT			
T. I. WRIGHT			

WIN! ONE OF TEN ENGLAND JOYPADS

You know, it wouldn't be like us to pass up the opportunity of some jingoistic joypad posing so here, for your delight and delectation are TEN Official England Joypads packs (featuring a blue Memory Card) kindly supplied by those denizens of independent PlayStation control systems, Leda Media Products.

All the joypads come with a bullishly patriotic (patriotic if you're English that is – the Celtic nations are not featured in this giveaway) three lions shield on a white background with, calm, calm... blue buttons! There are no cumbersome turbo buttons or bleepy buttons or triggers – just a highly efficient and straightforward control system to make you the envy of all your unswervingly-loyal-to-the-Crown pals.

Now, normally this would set you back a full £19.99 but if you're clever and lucky it'll cost you no more than a little brain power. All you have to do is send the answers to the



(1) Relive the summer's glorious, um, failure with this classy pad. Mmm.

following questions on the back of an envelope addressed to Jingo Joypad Compo, Official PlayStation Magazine Football Special, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Somerset BA1 2BW.

The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

This month's rhyming cryptic clue:

*He who answers A to all three
Will soon be on the right Track
But he who plumps for B or C
Has merely a brain full of cack*

1. What fabled creature did St George kill?

- A A Dragon
- B A Unicorn
- C An Inoffensive and odourless Frenchman

2. During WWII, which we won, a certain mentality, named after a French port, developed was this:

- A Dunkirk Spirit
- B Calais Farmer Blockade Hatred
- C Cannes Laughter

3. Finish this sentence: "The only good thing to come out of France is..."

- A Eurotunnel
- B Frog's Legs
- C Horsemeat

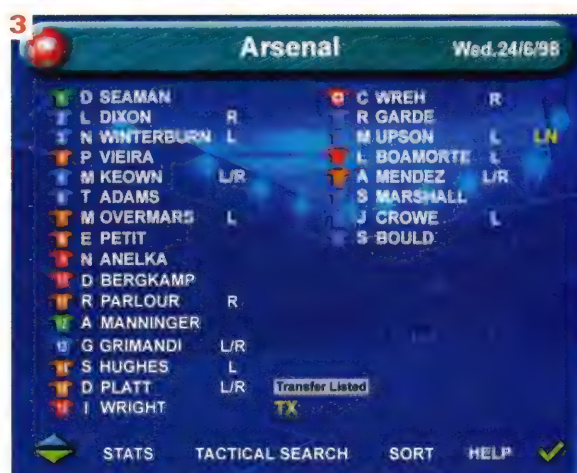
after your search you still haven't found the perfect fit to your requirements you can still comb the globe for a bucket shop footy genius and there's still the option for a custom search, should your Scout come back from Senegal empty handed. Once your new guy is in place he will be lovingly cared for by the Coach who will keep him on the straight and narrow to avoid burn out from over use. You also have all manner of squad, individual and specialist training plus a youth development feature to keep the team up to scratch after which it would be nice to sit in a velvet-seated private box and watch the game. Of course before that's possible you have to sort out your stadium, construction and upgrades are all available and, while costly, can often keep the fans well happy – so long as the cost doesn't fall directly on their shoulders. So many balls to juggle – so few hands.

Every match you play can be viewed in a variety of modes from the all-new, full-on 3D Kick Off engine to modest highlights if you're strapped for time. Highlights is the only view that won't allow you the chance of interacting but in other modes you can make substitutions based on the myriad of match facts you are presented on each player on the pitch: number of touches, successful passes, attempts on goal and so on...

Egg-headed footy fans unsatisfied with *Premier Manager 98*'s somewhat, um, less demanding challenge might be hoping that *Player Manager 2* turns out to be everything that its limp predecessor wasn't. For evrybody's sake, let's hope it is.



(1) Not much atmosphere, or cash, to be had here. (2) Viera, presumably, looking typically happy go lucky. (3) Another stunning screen full of valuable and clearly presented information. Great God Almighty!



FUTEBOL DE SALAO

Futebol de what?

Futebol de Salao. It's a five-a-side game played in South America and reckoned to be one of the main reasons why Brazil has produced players of the calibre of Pele, Zico and Ronaldo. The goals are small and it's played on a small, basketball-size court, but you can't use the walls to rebound the ball against.

But we've got five-a-side here, haven't we?

Yes, but in Brazil, they play with a special, small ball that doesn't bounce so the ball is always on the floor. Apparently, you can learn amazing control and ball skills – all the kids in Brazil play it. And they're not bad!

So?

So a guy called Simon Clifford has brought the game to Leeds and is setting up a federation that will cater for the game's development in this country. When Juninho and Emerson were at Middlesbrough, Simon got to know them and they often helped out, coaching the youngsters.

What's with this special ball, then?

Like we say, it's small (size two), quite spongy and it doesn't bounce at all. Mitre has got the licence to produce two versions of the ball in the UK (youth and adult) and the balls will be commercially available in September.

Will it take off?

Well, Futebol de Salao is getting loads of coverage on TV and in magazines and it looks great fun to play. The best thing about small-sided games is that the players get to touch the ball more often. We reckon Futebol de Salao is a Good Thing. Can't wait to get one of them balls...

For more information, contact the UK Federation of Futebol De Salao on 01253 730637

Each month **Total Football** feature true-life stories of fans dealt a dodgy deal in the proud name of football...

NIGHTMARES!

Lennie Thomas recounts a sorry tale of lost love L...

Most people hate Manchester United for one reason or another. It might be their arrogance in victory or their lack of grace in defeat, or that were just so bloody good. I hate them for another reason... a woman!

In 1983 I was living in Hertfordshire and going out with a United fan called Mary. When they got to the Cup Final against Brighton, she, wanted to go, but having never ventured into the Greater Manchester area, let alone Old Trafford, her chances of getting a ticket were slim.

I secured two standing tickets for £5 each. The game was a good one and Smith really should have scored. On the way back, Mary never said a word to me and, as much as I tried to assure her that I'd get tickets for the replay and that United would win, she was inconsolable. She didn't want to go out that night and just wanted to be "left alone".

On the evening of the replay, Mary was quiet and didn't speak to me at all. As we stood at the front of the terraces waiting for kick-off, a drunken United fan lurched towards us and fell at my feet and puked his liquid lunch and pre-match burger over my white Nikes. Mary thought this was great and nearly wet herself laughing.

After the game, which United won easily, she seemed relieved but no more talkative. I was a bit taken aback when, still stinking of puke, I congratulated her on her team's win and she snapped back that she "didn't want to go out with me anymore," and that she was "going to dump me" after the first game but "wanted to see the replay". She walked into the crowd and I never saw her again. I'm now living with a Southampton supporter and have no fear of being dumped at a Cup Final again.

TF

OLD SKOOL DAYS (PE)

That football means more than life or death itself has become something of a truism to the millions of fans

around the world – several billion tuned into that farce of a World Cup this summer. Many like to involve themselves in the sport, others just like to watch, but whatever the level of participation, the urge to indulge in the game of football using other media has proved irresistible. Since football itself began there have been attempts to recreate the thrills and spills of the great game indoors, with varying degrees of success.

The earliest known attempt at soccer simulation would be blow football. Generations convinced themselves that puffing through a straw at a small spherical object could somehow conjure up the excitement of Saturday afternoons. It's a stretched metaphor, but by trying to get a ball through an opponent's goal it reduces football to its most fundamental aspect.

Table football took the huge

step of giving you 11 players, rather than the one straw, providing a 100% improvement in realism in one fell swoop, even if they were skewered through their pelvises with a giant barbecue stick. It remains a glorious game, a pub favourite even today, allowing players to develop skilful passing games, creating superb angles and rocketing shots, while screaming at each other "No spinning!" and "You bastard!"

While table football fulfilled all the criteria of footballing excitement at the local ale house, it took those geniuses at Subbuteo™ to realise that there was potential for a miniaturised version of football that you could play at home without seriously endangering the crockery. This gaming masterpiece combined the essential appeal of the real thing – the need for reliable strategy and tactics, attention to detail encompassing all the popular national and international strips and, most of all, physical action. A flick-to-kick that hammered one home into the back of the net could almost bring the glory of '66 to your kitchen table, and a well-developed formation attack could reduce grown men to tears.

Attempts were made by others to cash in on the Subbuteo™ concept, the most memorable being the surrealistic Striker, where you pressed down on your little geezer's head, setting off a spasm through the spinal cord to produce a reflex reaction, inducing the right leg to swing forward and connect with the ball. At least that's how we think it worked. Anyway, the TV ads made it look great, but you never see it around today, so Subbuteo™ still holds the top spot in the "little plastic

figure" category.

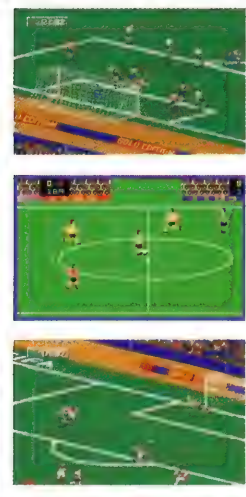
When computer games first claimed the hearts and minds of the nation's youth, it didn't take long for football to find its way onto silicon chips all over the land. Back in the heady days of 1980, Mattel's Intellivision console attempted to steal the thunder of the Atari VCS on a nascent videogaming scene by bundling it with *Soccer*, which garnered much attention for its three-dimensional pitch populated by congregations of pixels that actually resembled human beings. With the arrival of Commodore's C64 came another footy-flavoured killer app, *International Soccer*, with its large sprites and compelling gameplay. But it wasn't until 1988 that the real potential of football on home computers became apparent, with the C64 seeing the realistic *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer*, and the exciting *Microprose Soccer*, the latter being the first to feature action replays.

By the end of the '80s the Atari ST and Amiga computers created an even wider audience, and the legendary programmer Dino Dini published his series of *Kick Off* games, setting a new standard for footy sims, at least in the graphics department. But it wasn't until *Sensible Soccer* in 1992 that football found its apotheosis in the world of videogames. Naturally opinions differ in these sensitive matters, but ask any number of hardened and knowledgeable games fans for their all-time favourite football game, and *Sensi* (to use its honourable nickname) will top the list of most. Have no fear – it will be coming to a PlayStation very soon (see page 44).

With the rise of the consoles came more spectacular games

including EA's *FIFA Soccer*, which claimed the hearts of many on the Mega Drive, and the wondrous *ISS Deluxe* on the SNES (and which converted well to the PlayStation).

Nowadays, our PlayStations have enhanced every single element of football simulation, and there are a clutch of titles battling for the favour of this football-loving nation of ours, with *FIFA World Cup '98*, *ISS Pro* and *Actua Soccer 2* all impressing highly with their 3D graphics, fluid gameplay and sublime commentary. But as with all things videogamey, it won't stop there, and with the future promising updates of all the current favourites, plus the hotly anticipated PlayStation conversion of *Sensible Soccer*, things can only get better.



Well, we've come a long way in our trials and tribulations but the ultimate football game (other than football that is) is just around the corner.



PREMIER MANAGER 98

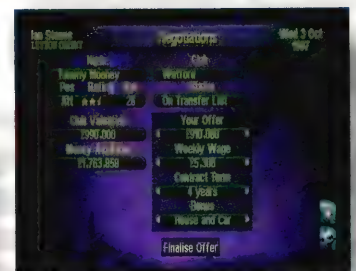
the true manager of the year

This prestigious award is given to those who achieve success where it matters and stand high above the competition.

This year, there can only be one winner. Premier Manager 98 is the truly definitive soccer management game on PlayStation.

Take on any team in the four English divisions and show your mettle in the hotseat. Endure the trials & tribulations that weigh upon the shoulders of every manager across the land.

Will your shoulders prove strong enough?



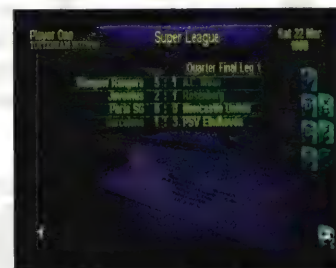
FULL TRANSFER SYSTEM AND NEGOTIATION FACILITIES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



COMPREHENSIVE STATISTICS ON OVER 2,700 PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS



WATCH YOUR EVERY GAME, WITH COMMENTARY FROM BARRY DAVIES



UPON DOMESTIC SUCCESS, ENTER THE HEIGHTS OF EUROPEAN COMPETITION



LOADING

40% COMPLETE

[BOOTY]

SINCE THIS IS A SPECIAL FOOTBALL OCCASION WE THOUGHT WE'D DEVIATE FROM THE USUAL GAME PARAPHENALIA AND BRING YOU A SELECTION OF PORTABLE FOOTBALL GAMES, COURTESY OF OUR CHUMS AT T3 MAGAZINE



**TIGER ELECTRONICS
WORLD CUP KEYCHAIN
SOCCER - £8**

You've heard of pocket billiards, now what about pocket soccer? The object of this tiny footie game is to stop balls from slamming into the back of the net (ooh, painful) by dextrous use of your digits. Attach it to your Beamer keys and girls will beat a path to your door, if only to hear the decidedly odd sound of London Bridge Is Falling Down coming from your trousers. Very Freudian.



**DAH YONG
TOY MOTORISED
SOCCER BALL - £4**

Okay, it's not an electronic footie game, but it's still the best thing ever. Stick in a battery, switch it on and the little ball trundles off across the carpet and around the room, scaring the crap out of pets. Just don't leave the door open, or it'll wander outside and you'll lose it forever. And that would be very, very sad.



**TIGER ELECTRONICS
FIFA: ROAD TO WORLD
CUP 98 - £14**

Official licensed game that looks more like a rugby ball than a football, if you ask us, but then you're not supposed to kick it round the park, are you? It comes with 19 games of increasing difficulty, and spindly little matchstick blokes who can kick and pass the ball up and down the pitch and don't snog each other when they score. And it's got a penalty shoot-out and everything! Well hurrah for that, then.

TIGER ELECTRONICS ALL OUT ACTION SOCCER - £7

Looks more like a Space Invaders game, but that's probably because it's one of a series - which includes a couple of racing games, a Space Invaders game and tennis. Put simply, a player passes the ball to you, which you then have to keep on the move before popping into the goal at either end. You get ten points for each goal, and you're allowed five misses before you're sent off for an early bath. It's ridiculously simple, but stupidly fun. Kind of.



TIGER ELECTRONICS WORLDWIDE SOCCER - £13

This game is identical to the big World Cup one, except it costs less. And the players are smaller, and you're given a cup every five, ten and 19 games you win. And the controls are the other way around and it hasn't got a FIFA official licence. Actually, it's nothing like the other game. Sorry we even mentioned it.



COOL TEC SOCCER '97 - £4

Ah, a game with transferable skills that will help improve your life. Well, that's what the manual says. You play the goalie and have to dodge the balls. Despite the fact the game promises to give you "satisfaction in the long run", it's as satisfying as being smacked round the head with a brick. We chucked it in the bin after five tedious minutes.



COMPETITION WIN!

• This £1000 International Standard Table Football, um, Table!

• Total Football Subscriptions!

• Official PlayStation Magazine Subscriptions!



TO THE FRENCH IT'S BABYFOOT, TO THE AMERICANS IT'S FOOSBALL AND TO US IT'S GOOD OLD TABLE FOOTBALL. NEVER BEFORE HAS THIS SIMPLE GAME BEEN SO POPULAR. PERHAPS THIS IS DOWN TO ITS REGULAR APPEARANCE ON *FRIENDS*, OR MAYBE THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL LEAGUE (SCARY BUT TRUE), BUT IT'S PROBABLY THE SIMPLE FACT THAT IT'S SUCH BLOODY GOOD FUN. AFTER LOSING A FEW HOURS PLAYING ON OUR LOCAL'S TABLE WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A FANTASTIC IDEA TO BUY ONE AND GIVE IT AWAY IN YET ANOTHER OF OUR BRILLIANT COMPO'S. AND, AS IF THIS WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH, WE'RE GOING TO CHUCK IN 25 SUBSCRIPTIONS TO TWO OF THE COUNTRY'S BEST READS: *TOTAL FOOTBALL* MAGAZINE AND *OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION* MAGAZINE.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO AREN'T TOO FAMILIAR WITH THE SPORT, THE TABLE WE'RE GIVING AWAY IS THE VERY SAME MODEL USED BY THE FRENCH PROFESSIONAL BABYFOOT TABLE LEAGUE. THE £1000 RENE PIERRE IS RECKONED TO BE THE BEST TABLE AVAILABLE. JUST WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE THE INDIVIDUALLY SCULPTURED PLAYERS ON NON-REVOLVING RODS, FEEL THE SHOCK ABSORBING SPRINGS OR WITNESS THE VARIABLE NUMBER OF BALLS PER GAME. THIS REALLY IS WORTH SELLING A GRANDPARENT TO GET HOLD OF.

QUESTION:

WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS ALLOWED TO TAKE PART IN A SINGLE GAME OF TABLE FOOTBALL ACCORDING TO THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION'S RULES?

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO;
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OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE FOOTBALL SPECIAL
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FIRST!

ISSUE 29

OUT NOW!

LIBERO GRANDE

NAMCO TEST THE ONE MAN THEORY

Namco has decided to forgo the current football videogame trend not only by releasing a footy game towards the latter part of the year rather than during the now-lost but highly-profitable-while-it lasted World Cup fever™, but also by offering players something of a different product when it does finally hit the streets.

Indeed, *Libero Grande*, a 3D arcade-influenced football game, throws a new angle on an age old concept by forcing players to play the same player throughout the entire match. Any position (other than goalie) can be played, but, once selected, players aren't allowed to change until the referee has blown the final whistle. This forces players used to swapping players as often as the ball is passed to adopt a whole new tactical approach. Furthermore, the developers wished to reinforce the idea of team play that they felt was lacking from other football titles as well as providing players with a much stronger sense of forming part of a team. As a result, the AI routines needed for the other players to play together as a realistic team are certainly ambitious but early indications are



(1) Although it looks like he's hopping about the field he's actually showing some rather silky skills and evading a challenge. **(2)** The off-pitch detail is much better than the usual effort with all the stadiums looking very realistic.

The Boy Would've Done Great If...

... HE HADN'T BECOME ASSOCIATE PRODUCER AT EA SPORTS IN CANADA

NICK MALAPERIMAN, ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
(FIFA), EA SPORTS

What? A bloke who works in videogames could've been a professional footballer?

Too right. When the joypad was but a twinkle in his eye, Nick played for Berkshire schools with Brett Angell and Raphael Meade. When he was 15, he tried out at Reading and made the youth squad for a season, before playing for Maidenhead.

And... what else?

He captained Farnborough College when he was at university and his star shone sufficiently for him to be invited for trials at Watford. Sheffield United skipper David Holdsworth (then a striker) was on trial there at the same time.

Go on...

David signed for Watford, Nick went off to the States to coach girls for a year ("Nice work if you can get it," he says). When he came back, he signed for Hemel Hempstead in Diadora League Division Two.



Any Hemel highlights?

After pulling a hamstring on his debut, he went on to play two seasons for the 'Hempstead' and his main claim to fame was scoring a goal in the FA Cup preliminary round against the Metropolitan

Police. And how many of us can say we've scored in the FA Cup? Apart from you, Alan Shearer... yes, we know you're reading this.

Career over?

Heck no. Before the move to Canada, Nick played

for Earley Town in the Charrington Chiltonian League. Oh yes.

Across the Atlantic?

Nick tried out for Vancouver Whitecaps (now the '86ers') but the criteria, apparently, was based on your ball-juggling skills and your ability to kiss the coach, Sir Godfrey Ringpiece's ****. Said coach was an ex-Blackburn Rover's player (NB: that name might not be true).

Did he drink Canada dry?

Looks like it. Nick was dismissed from the field of play for drinking a can of beer while a player was receiving treatment for an injury. Ungentlemanly conduct, so the ref reckoned.

Any regrets?

Nah... Manchester United fan Nick knew they'd never be able to fit the name on the shirt. And Motty would never be able to pronounce 'Malaperiman'. You try it...

And now?

Nick works on the best PlayStation football games you can buy. Not a bad life, eh?



[1] Unsurprisingly the Brazilians were the first team to be converted into digital dynamos. **[2]** Instead of the usual football game there are a variety of running styles from Stoichkov's waddle to Ronaldo's rocket-like action. **[3,4]** The footballers are capable of some stunning shots when they get into the penalty area.

promising. Dual Shock compatibility is also under consideration.

In total, 32 international sides are offered and a two-player splitscreen mode should make the final version. The action is viewed from a third person perspective at all times, and the camera system works better than most. The developers tried several other options, including a first person perspective, but felt the current one worked best.

The game is an port of the coin-op version currently doing the rounds in the world's arcades and features the same options with obvious visual compromises as a result of the PlayStation's graphical limitations. However, the motion-captured polygonal characters are particularly well animated and whilst they cannot hope to boast a similar amount of detail, they are commendably close to their coin-op counterpart.

Libero Grande isn't the company's first venture into the footballing field (Namco is famed for its driving and beat-em-up series). Its most notable attempt so far, *Soccer Prime Goal EX* may not have revolutionised the PlayStation footy genre, but it did represent a commendable effort as well as a promising glimpse of what Namco might achieve with its next attempt. By avoiding the current saturated footy market, the company also maximises its chances of gaining a substantial amount of attention later on, and on current form *Libero Grande* deserves all the attention it gets.

The game is currently being finished by one of Namco's internal development teams under the guidance of lead designer Yukihiro Yagi and game planner Jun Moriwaki. Neither are strangers to the genre having worked on *Soccer Prime Goal EX* and the arcade version of *Libero Grande*, respectively.



[1,2] It was rubbish, it looked quite poor and it played rather badly - but hey, don't let's get too much of a downer on it *Soccer Prime Goal EX* also had a rubbish name. All right, all right, but it was one of the first PlayStation footy games.

Each month **Real Football** feature true-life stories of fans dealt a dodgy deal in the proud name of football...

NIGHTMARES!

The life of the away fan has never been an easy one. No one knows this better than Steve McKeivitt, a lifelong Wigan Athletic fan who is used to the 'we all came in the same taxi' syndrome – their average home gate for 94/95 was one of the worst in the Third Division. But nothing could have prepared him his trip to Mansfield Town.

"I don't often get to home games because I live in Sheffield, but Mansfield is only down the road so I decided to go. I was meeting some friends there, but when I turned up they weren't where I was supposed to meet them. I thought they must have gone in already. But when I got inside there weren't ANY Wigan fans in – I was the first poor sod to arrive.

"It wouldn't have been so bad, but loads of Mansfield fans were already in at the home end. I sat on the terrace reading my programme, but all the time the Mansfield fans were chanting louder and louder. I was trying to work out what they were singing – the match hadn't even started – and then I realised they were singing at ME.

It was like a nightmare, I got the full works: "Where's your skateboard parked?"; "What's it like to have no mates?"; "We know who you are and you're gonna die"... it went on for ages. It was getting really embarrassing, so I went to the toilet, but even then I could hear them singing: "Where's the queer gone?". I bought a pie on the way back, but it just gave them something new to sing: "You fat bastard! Who ate all the pies?" etc. This went on for 25 minutes until FINALLY the Wigan fans turned up.

Things, unfortunately didn't improve once the game started. Mansfield scored with the last kick of the match to win 4-3. This has been a true story, but please – don't have nightmares...

TF



(1) Surely someone should at least be looking at this Argentinian as he strides through the midfield? Or is just me? (2) The keepers come miles and made a foolhardy challenge outside the are. What's it to be. A dink, a fluff or a red card inducing dive?

UEFA SOCCER

INFOGRAMES TAKE THEIR TIME WITH FIFA RIVAL

When you're playing **UEFA Soccer**, the first thing you notice, even in the relatively unfinished version we had a bash on, is the sheer class of the graphics. Big and bold and, as the programmers themselves will tell you again and again, heavily influenced by the highly regarded and rather lovely **Virtua Soccer** coin-op. The players are

large, detailed and polygonal and play for all the top European clubs, Argentinian and Brazilian representatives even pop up to enliven matters further. Lobbed in to mix up the action a bit. Also, having the licence should mean that all the player names are present and correct.

The commentary comes from familiar, forthright know-it-all Alan Hansen and

the highly-regarded Alan Green (of Radio Five Live fame) which gives it at least one slight advantage over *ISS Pro* (though not *ISS Pro '98*), although good old Motty has always been the firm office favourite.

And while it's true that developers Power And Magic (PAM) haven't been around as a firm for all that long, but the 20 individuals working on the project are all highly experienced Ocean/Infogrames stalwarts and President Marc Dijan was the founder and general manager of Ocean France, so the pedigree is certainly there in bucketloads.

The target the team have set themselves is to knock the *ISS Pro*, *FIFA* and *Actua* brands off of their football game pedestals in terms of gameplay, while also double-whammying the FIFA

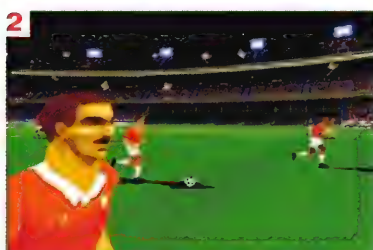




(1) Power And Magic have signed up Radio Five Live's Alan Green and Alan Hansen from *Match of the Day* to provide the commentary. Sounds alright to us. **(2)** All the international teams in Europe will be represented and some of the bigger non-European sides like Brazil and Argentina. **(3)** The CPU players seem to be lacking commitment at the moment. **(4)** Kicking about in a lower-league stadium.



licence with their own UEFA contract. Whether this is really going to turn out to be possible or not will only be revealed as we approach the game's constantly slipping release date (currently pencilled in as 'Autumn'), but



(1, 2) The floodlight shadows in full effect, and a lovely 'tache to boot.

it's reassuring to know that in gameplay terms the squad are quoting a heavy *Sensible Soccer* influence.

The 16-bit classic is constantly cited as the Best Game Ever – although it looked rather todge by today's standards (for the latest on its PlayStation comeback turn to page 44).

Predictably, motion-capture was extensively employed to give *Viva Soccer*'s suitably advanced looking players a more modishly realistic gait and we're promised a slightly better-than-average 20 attributes for each individual player, including the usual ones like speed, skill and agility while adding less obvious characteristics like reaction and perception.

This, alongside the fluidity of *Sensible Soccer* should, potentially at least, give you the ability to knock the ball around the park with ease and intelligence, which could well herald a new standard in football games. Again though, these are promises, promises, promises and not facts evident from playing early versions.

Another promise is that *UEFA Soccer* will contain more frames of animation than any of its rivals to date, which shouldn't going to harm the game's chances any.

On the fringes of the action itself there are 17 different stadia on a sliding scale: five huge, frighteningly

atmospheric ones, 10 medium and two smart-looking, all-weather training pitches which, again, seem from this distance to be doing the business visually and are backed up by visual bells and whistles like the usual lens flare and accurately mapped player shadows.

The release date was originally slated as the beginning of this year so already we're heavily into slippage time but the project was certainly looking the business then and has improved since – all we can hope for now is that the game realises its potential and these are more than empty promises. Fingers crossed then...



This'll either be one of the game's two training pitches or a French league game then.



LOADING

DELETE

INDUSTRY FORUM

MORE INSIDER TATTLE FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MATTER. THIS MONTH:
ANDY COLLINS, JON HARE, MARK TAYLOR, SIMON BYRON, ROB PEGLEY AND
JON PALMER. TOP BODS ALL AND FITTINGLY, WORDS FLOWED LIKE WINE...



Words: Andrew Collins
Pictures: Martin Burton

What did everybody think to last season's Premier League campaign? Good, Bad or Ugly?

MT: It was great because Manchester United didn't win the league... everyone became an Arsenal fan.

SB: They should do reversible tops for the end of season run-ins with Man Utd on one side and Arsenal on the other.

RP: I support Portsmouth so I haven't got a Premiership team I follow but I do like Manchester United to lose so maybe you could have a Man Utd shirt with a big cross through it... anti-Man Utd.

MT: The reason it was so good wasn't just the way Arsenal won it but the way Man Utd threw it away. I think the whole country enjoyed watching this decline, slowly losing the cups, out of Europe, winning nothing.

SB: Similar to the situation in Scotland I think it's good for the league that someone different wins. It bodes well for the future.

RP: It would have been nice if one of the big ones had gone down, Tottenham or Everton.

JP: I'm a Premiership supporter now (Charlton fan) but as a first division supporter last season I wanted Tottenham and Everton to go down just to demonstrate that there wasn't that big gulf between the two.

RP: We had to make do with Man City going down to the Second (much laughter). It was still nice.

And the high point?

MT: The moment I enjoyed most was watching Ferguson walk past all the Man Utd fans to the tunnel; normally he strides along waving and clapping, and he looked so upset and then Wenger walked about with a big grin on his face.

JP: Ashley Ward's goal at Liverpool, proving a team can come up from nowhere and win.

AC: Barnsley going down's gotta to be a good one for me. Part of me wanted them to stay up but only if that was at the expense of Spurs or Everton.

What about next season then?

JP: Chelsea to win it.

RP: I don't think Chelsea will win it... you've got to know how to win it like Arsenal, Man Utd, Liverpool. I always make a prediction other than Man Utd but if I had to put on a tenner I'd always put it on them. And then hope that I lost it.

MT: At Chelsea it doesn't seem to matter who they buy, you know they'll go to Charlton and lose 2-0 when they really need the win. How many teams come together with so many important players and click immediately?

The big football success story at the moment, games-wise, is World Cup '98. Why?



Andrew Collins

Job: Staff Writer, *Official PlayStation Football Special*
Quote: "Barnsley going down was a good one for me."



Jon Hare

Job: Creator of *Sensible Soccer*
Quote: "Build lifesize football dolls, and give everyone a remote control and a ball."



Mark Taylor

Job: Writer, *Total Football*
Quote: "Man Utd threw it away. I think the whole country enjoyed watching the decline."



Simon Byron

Job: Account Director, Bastion PR and industry veteran.
Quote: "The financial risks are higher than they used to be."



Rob Pegley

Job: Editor, *PSM*
Quote: "When you play a videogame everyone's Alan Shearer."



Jon Palmer

Job: Author of *Superstars of the World Cup*
Quote: "I wanted Tottenham and Everton to go down."



So many soccer egg-heads in one place, all drinking. Fancy that.

SB: Probably the gap between *World Cup* and *Road to World Cup* is to blame. While the *FIFA* games have been panned they still sell loads, maybe we're wrong but the public are right.

JH: Everyone was really into what gaming is about but people can't overlook graphics. The key element to gaming is how much control to leave the player balanced with how much the game controls itself. *FIFA* controls quite a lot for you, and people are happy with that. *ISS* is a great game and I love it but you can't direct your passes or shots. People are responding to those things as if they don't care, it helps them to win. We're used to a longer route to glory. Maybe the punters are right. EA should feel good about *World Cup '98*, they've finally got a half-decent product to back up the licence.

What about licences themselves?

JH: Publishers choose to vote with their money because it's safe. To the } non-discerning punter who doesn't read games mags *FIFA* is going to be that

important. In foreign countries it's even more important, we think good design's important, but in France, Germany and other countries, if the licence is good, and it's got the picture on the front it'll sell. Licences are now such a legal minefield. Every big player has a trademark; we had to mess the names up a bit for *Sensi '98* but when we went to America they said they wanted the names messed up even more. When you're trying to create an authentic football game for fans, you can't do it because all the authentic things have been copyrighted. Financially the stakes are so high it's not worth risking.

SB: People will always want to play football games and the PlayStation market is so mainstream that it'll just grab onto a licence.

Football games have evolved beyond all recognition in the last five years. What is your response to these hardware-driven advances?

JH: It depends on the hardware you're working with. With PC it's a nightmare because the hardware is so non-specific. You spend as much energy fighting the machine as writing the game. Imagine writing a book and having people changing your pen, your paper, your printer cartridge so half the time you're just trying to get the words on the paper. A stable hardware platform would help better games because a lot of the time you're just taking what you did in the last game and converting it to another format. Only 20% goes into originating things. Given time on a stable format

every game can be better.

What else hinders developers in 1998?

JH: There's a myriad of things stopping real progress – that's why you're getting games regurgitated all the time. Someone is saying I want a game in a year and the safe option is to copy last year's game, and add a few characters. Any room for real creativity isn't there like it used to be because the financial risks are higher, and the hardware is turning round faster.

How do you feel about motion-capture technology?

JH: It is difficult. If it were more sophisticated then graphically, games would be a lot better. If you're designing a game it's like arranging furniture. You might set the cupboard and the wardrobe up and it looks nice but when you add a sofa it doesn't look quite right. That's what games design is like – every time you add or take away an element you have to rearrange the other elements. And the more you have, the more complex it becomes. There's no point in perfect tools as the hardware is changing far too quickly.

RP: Motion-capture became the vogue, everyone had to have motion-capture.

What are the advantages then?

JH: Controlling MC is the answer; sprites have got a hell of a lot of control; you need motion-capture to be controlled like sprites then you're gonna get instant response if the 3D engine can match it. We're still learning to cope with 3D.

SB: I don't think it's been done badly, a lot of the 3D football games have done it well. It's what people want. Going back to the Amiga, I could show my dad

Sensible Soccer and tell him it's a football game and he'd think 'No it's not'. Show him *FIFA* now and it looks like a football game. The next big thing is they need to move closer to being football rather than games. *Sensible Soccer* is a great game but it's not football.

In most games you very rarely play as a team would play football – you can't hoof the ball into space.

RP: What do you think of Namco's new football game, *Libero Grande*? Rather than controlling a whole team, you're just one player as it goes around you and you have to be in the right place.

SB: It sounds good in theory but it would be like school boy football with 22 players chasing the ball.

So what's the ideal solution?

JH: If you want a good football game you build lifesize football dolls, you give everyone a remote control and a ball and you let them play.

MT: Do you though? I'm not sure about this. Isn't being able to play a good game better than having something that looks like football? Don't people want something different?

JP: At the end of the day if you want a good football game you buy a football, and go down the park with your mates.

RP: When you play real football you know your limitations. I'm a midfielder who'll play a holding role but when you play a videogame everyone's Shearer.

JP: That could be interesting – where you play a game and think 'I'm going to wait on the back post'. That could be great.

JH: It wouldn't work. That attacker would be back defending, he'd be all over the park because hanging around is the most boring thing in the world. People don't like to be standing at bus stops in games. We expect to be involved wholeheartedly or not at all.

VOX POP

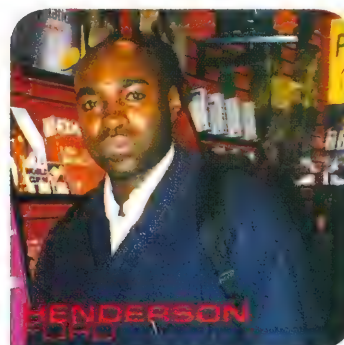
We nipped down to our local games emporium to see what the population was playing. Unsurprisingly EA's latest effort came up trumps.



Age, Occupation: 20, Sales assistant
Favourite Footy game: *World Cup '98*
 "I love it. It's a great game with some fantastic graphics and gameplay."
Favourite Football Team: Liverpool



Age, Occupation: 14, School
FFG: *FIFA: Road to the World Cup '98*
 "I like that you can change all the players and buy more if you need them."
FFT: Liverpool



Age, Occupation: 34, British Telecom
FFG: *Three Lions*
 "It's a good game. It's a challenge to score and has very good graphics."
FFT: Leeds United



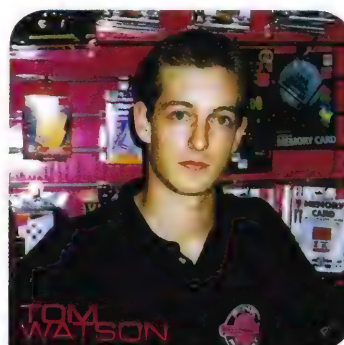
Age, Occupation: 20, Student
FFG: *FIFA: Road to the World Cup '98*
 "It's the only one I've got. I like the graphics and the gameplay. It's fun."
FFT: Liverpool



Age, Occupation: 12, 'School yobbo'
FFG: *World League Soccer*.
 "I love the graphics and all the teams. You can do so much with it."
FFT: Sheffield Wednesday



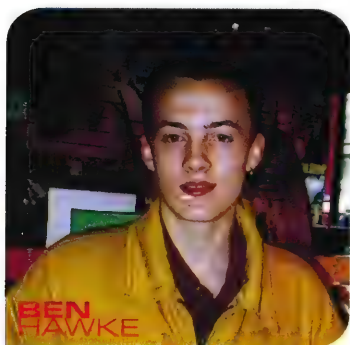
Age, Occupation: 39, Postman
FFG: *FIFA '97*
 "I'm really rubbish at it, my son likes to run rings round me when we play it."
FFT: Bristol Rovers



Age, Occupation: 20, Sales assistant
FFG: *FIFA: Road to the World Cup '98*
 "It's very similar to *WC '98* with the graphics but the layout is much better."
FFT: England



Age, Occupation: 17, Sales executive
FFG: *World Cup '98*
 "It's easy to play and it seems to have much better graphics than the others."
FFT: England



Age, Occupation: 18, Sales executive
FFG: *World Cup '98*
 "It's easy to play and has some great difficulty settings to make it fair."
FFT: Aston Villa



Age, Occupation: 26, Shop assistant.
FFG: *World Cup '98*
 "It's fast with detailed graphics and the accuracy of the players is great."
FFT: Bath City



Age, Occupation: 16, Student
FFG: *World Cup '98*
 "The gameplay is so smooth. I love to take England all the way to the final."
FFT: Crystal Palace



Age, Occupation: 17, Student
FFG: *ISS Pro*
 "It's a brilliant game with fantastic graphics but the commentary is awful."
FFT: Liverpool

LOADING

85% COMPLETE

WHAT THE HELL IS: MOTION CAPTURE?

WE WENT BEHIND THE SCENES WITH *VIVA FOOTBALL* TO FIND OUT...



Gamers need motion-capture because while we can all be convinced by cutting-edge light-sourcing and 3D surround sound, alarm bells start ringing deep in our brain if people don't move properly. Perception teaches us to appreciate things about folk from how they get about – whether they're young or old, male or female, sick or healthy. We perceive movement before even colour or form. A psychoanalyst would say it's a survival instinct: part of our hunter/gatherer genetic make-up. Football fans agree that it's good motion that makes a game feel right.

Creating convincing movement was a priority for the team designing Virgin Interactive's new boot-em-up, *Viva Football*, so we went behind the scenes to report from the latest and greatest in motion-capture.

Still don't get what 'it' is? Allow us to



(1-3) This might look easy to you, degrading yourself at the highest level for a few seconds of digital fame, but really, those leotards.



explain. You use a computer to digitise movement, attaching hot points to real people and then monitoring how those points change position. You get the movement of a simple skeleton, which can then be applied to a 3D model. The whole attraction of motion-capture technology is that it lends finished work a previously sought after naturalism: all the foibles and fidgets of the human body in action can

be turned into algorithms and applied to 3D engines.

The players drafted in for the *Viva Football* motion-capture sessions were Barnet's finest: Aaron Archer, Matt Brady and, back in goal, Lee Pearce. The shoot was done way back in January 1996 using Jim Henson's (of Muppets-fame) Creature Shop. The choice of Henson's studio was because, as producer Joss Ellis justifies:

"They were local and they have a good reputation."

The three models wore specially made leotards, which had to be snug-fitting so that the marker balls were held tight to the skin. The colour of the kit is irrelevant, so long as it isn't reflective, because you're only capturing a series of about 22 inch-diameter balls. Practice runs were run at Bagley's Studio, but the shoot proper was done entirely indoors in the Janet Adegoke Leisure Centre in Shepherd's Bush. As Ellis describes: "You want to be inside so you have no sunlight messing up the capture with extraneous spots of light." As for the effects of running on wood instead of grass: "We used a 15mm thick crashmat which simulated the feel of real turf remarkably well. We taped them down to avoid them sliding." Another sticky problem faced by

the motion-capture team was balls falling off, as Ellis elaborates: "Being low to the ground is tough and diving to the ground tends to shake the buggers off."

On the more high-tech side of the motion-capture, Virgin used an optical-tracking Vicon system from Oxford Metrics. Multiple cameras were synchronised to record a massive set of 3D movement data. Six infra-red cameras were brought into action for three days and on top of this, a double system (12 cameras) was employed to get the long fast runs in and capture ball data. The cameras captured at the Vicon standard of 120 frames per second and then resampled down to 30fps. Ellis clarifies: "The high speed ensures you get the very fast motions that can occur especially hands and feet." Ball data was captured at the same time as player movements

(1-2) Despite what bearded bizzaros might tell you the best way to emulate human movement is humiliating people, despite the advances in hierarchical skeletal systems. You heard it here first.



LOADING

98% COMPLETE



because "...it's very useful for the programmers to see how the ball worked in certain situations and sometimes we use the captured ball when it's close into the player, such as chest down and trap the ball."

Using motion-capture data points on all key joints, the team found that they still had to massage the results to get the results they wanted. Grabbing all that data was only the first step. For *Viva*, the capture took four days and the resampling took a year! So long that applications evolved, as according to Ellis: "We started on 3D Studio 4 and changed to Max; and had to restart... we had to make many hand tweaks and animations, especially to the body contact samples."

We also had to alter the pace of the animations to fit the game action and avoid the 'wait for the animation to finish playing before the game responds to your input' as seen in other games."

In post-production, motion-capture artists looked to trick the eye into seeing fluid movement. A kick, for example, has theoretically an infinite number of tiny, subtle movements within it. Sampling just 30 frames out of every second can trick the eye into thinking the movement is fluid, but if you're only looking for ten frames to describe a motion, then you have to ask what's important.

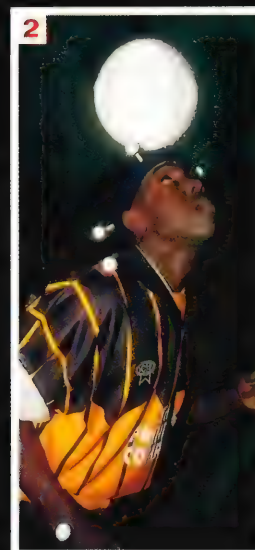
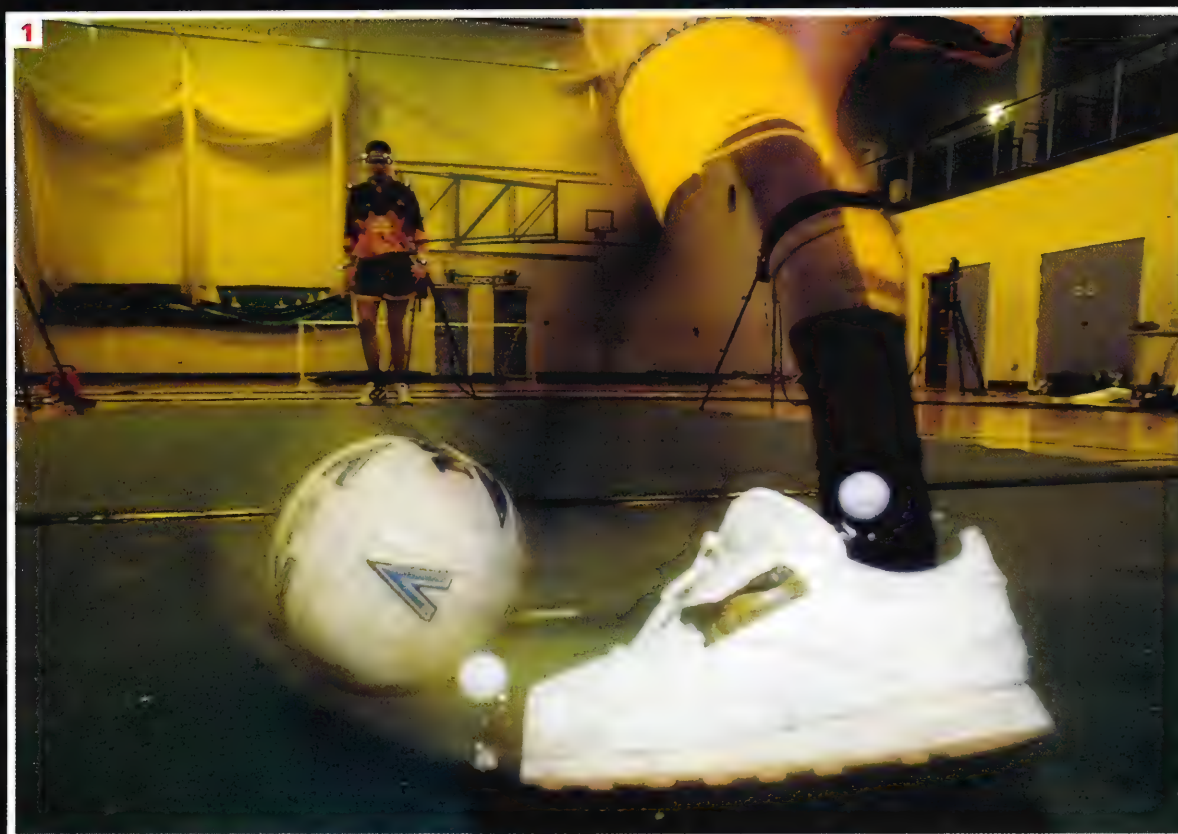
Merely taking every third frame say, could miss essential animations – maybe the points that your eye looks for. Also such culling of frames would only serve to make it choppy. Ellis gives the trick away, saying that: "Persistence of vision makes it work, but it's the frame rate and how you 'chop it up' within the sequence that makes it look good. You should only tweak the start and end of a capture so that it blends in well. The most important part is the 'action point'. That is to say the moment of contact with ball or other characters."

The perennial problem of markers being hidden by body parts or other actors in a shot was a post-production issue. "Once you have captured the data, the Vicon editor is used to work out what happened when there was an occlusion. It was a frame-by-frame process! The more cameras you have the better this is, and most of the data has redundancy. For example, there are four points for the top of the head, but if you lose one, the triangle gives the data."

Another difficulty faced when working with the dataset is creating believable joins between separate animations. As Ellis describes: "We tried blending the moves, but it made the game too slow. So we keyframed the data for cut points that the program uses to select the next



[1-3] No matter how you look at this, even the seasoned professional must feel a little daft. Think about it. Go on, think! **[4]** The stage is set, the cameras are ready and the lads are slipping into their cossies. Mmmm.



1 Every movement you make is captured by these machines, so it isn't an ideal time to go and do something illegal. **2** Heid the ball! **3** After all their efforts the lads involved can rest assured that they have done their bit for videogames.

animation to play. We also mirrored every move so we could blend successfully into left- or right-footed animations, plus we hand-tweaked the capture data. We wrote our own plug-in for 3D Studio Max to merge animations."

There really is no 'trick' to animating properly. Other than the human eye. This could probably explain why so many Disney animators still rely on classical 'onion skinning' to create fluid motion – the process of merely comparing frames and marking the movements on the next frame, constantly checking back to see how the two images match. It's also the method used for drawing traditional in-game sprites employed in earlier football games.

The temptation to exaggerate movement in post production is particularly tempting. The problem being that real action is flat and depends on conventions like gravity and biology. Things that in the real world we can't do much about. Why would a developer want to use real human movement in what essentially is a game, as opposed to a biology lesson? The license to exaggerate

is valid, fully stamped, free of endorsements and raring to go, but as Ellis explains: "it's better the get the actor to exaggerate at the time of the shoot."

But that doesn't mean that the motion-capture in *Viva Football* is free of farce or fouls, as Ellis reveals. "We captured pretty much everything that we could think of: fouls; pushing; stumbles; headbutts; reactions to being sent off; being booked; losing the game; missing a goal; warming up; a whole two minutes of 'keeping the ball up'; Cantona's 'Kung Fu' and of course Maradona's 'Hand of God'." There's even a massive selection of customised goal celebrations including "somersaults; falling backwards; Ian Wright's run; Paul Merson's lager drinking; Klinsman's dive and more historical ones such as Mick Channon's Windmill."

It's been claimed by many that motion-capture is a universal panacea and has even revolutionised the Hollywood special effects industry. Joss Ellis is firm on whether it is a cure-all: "Of course not. Can you do me a spider, or a six-headed dragon?"



COMPETITION

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WORTH £1000!



STOP STRAINING YOUR EYES AT THAT PIDDLY LITTLE THING IN THE CORNER AND TREAT THEM TO A VISUAL FEAST COME THE NEW SEASON, COURTESY OF THIS TOP OF THE RANGE TELEVISUAL RECEPTION AND RELAY DEVICE (TELLY). THE HITACHI C32WD2TN MEASURES IN AT A JUICY 32 INCHES OF WIDESCREEN PLEASURE AND COULD SOON BE DOMINATING YOUR LIVING ROOM.

TO CELEBRATE THE SUCCESS OF *PREMIER MANAGER 98* AND THE RAPID MANNER IN WHICH *ACTUA SOCCER 3* IS COMING TOGETHER, OVER-FRIENDLY SHEFFIELD CODERS GREMLIN HAVE STUMPED UP A GRAND, JUST TO BUY YOU THIS TELLY. FOR A CHANCE TO WIN, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING, FRIGHTENINGLY EASY QUESTION...

QUESTION:

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WAS IT;

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- C) USA

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TURN THE PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS ON GREMLIN'S ACTUA SOCCER 3...

Actua Soccer 3

The game that set the footy world alight is coming home, with every new option that you could dream of. All that's missing is the bucket of vindaloo.



(1) Not a creature stirred. (2) England seem unmoved until... (3) ...they take a shot.



Despite its lack of a big name licence, *Actua Soccer* came from nowhere to become quite a household name in the PlayStation world, with daringly innovative camera angles, a good commentary team, and deep, challenging gameplay ensuring that

the game in its many incarnations became well known and well liked. And just like the other come-from-nowhere-to-a-settled-place-in-the-top-flight masters, Wimbledon, the latest *Actua Soccer* looks well set to hold on to its place amongst the elite, and quite possibly with a bit more style than its down-at-heel real life counterparts.

Last time around, Alan Shearer was the game's big name to compensate for the lack of a licence, with a little known 17-year-old, Michael Owen, providing the motion-capture. This time around though, England's preferred strike

partnership were either too busy or too pricey to lend their time to the *Actua Soccer* brand, so the

ACTUA SOCCER 3
LOOKS WELL SET TO
HOLD ON TO ITS PLACE
AMONGST THE ELITE.

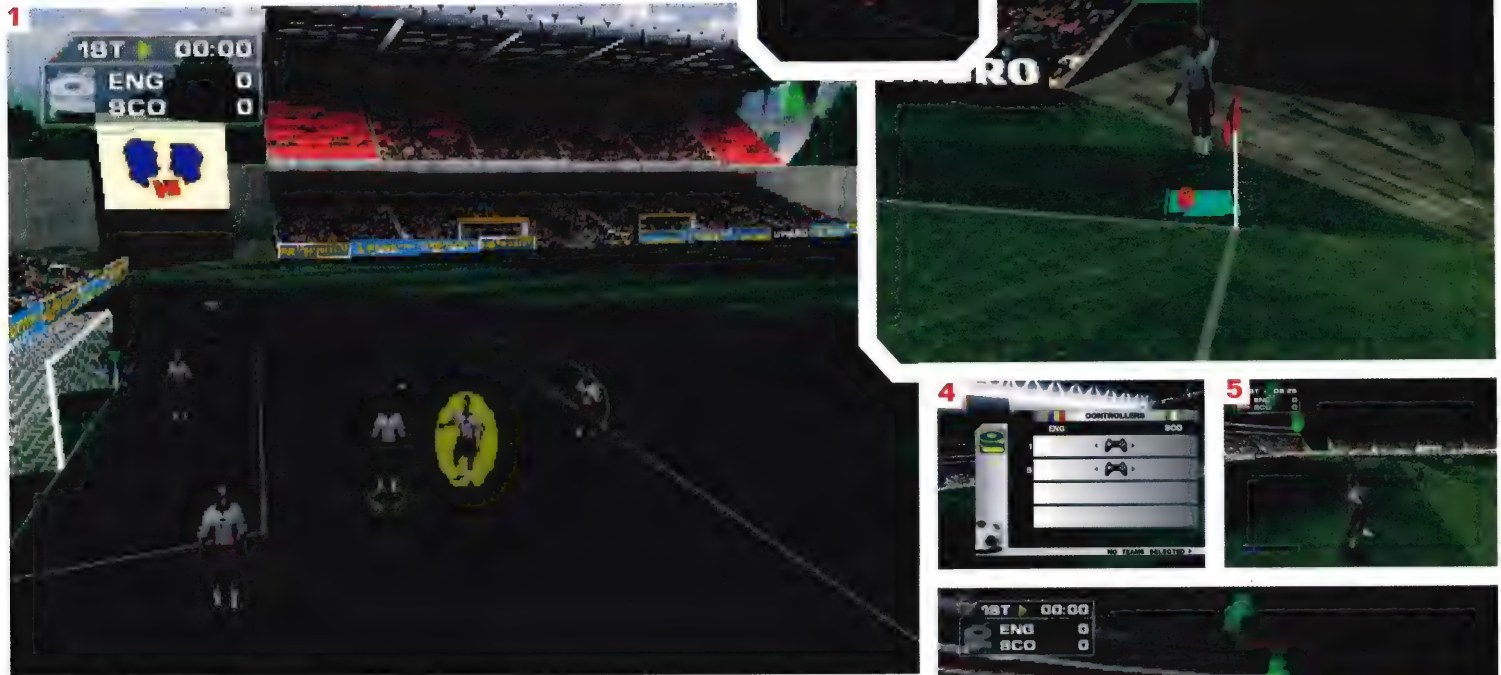


(1) The trend for real-life adverts continues (2,3) Protest as much as you like mate.



■ PUBLISHER:	Gremlin Interactive	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ DEVELOPER:	Gremlin Interactive	■ STYLE:	Arcade
■ RELEASE DATE:	December	■ PLAYERS:	One to Eight

(1) The realism is fantastic. Just take a look at the half empty stand if you don't believe us. **(2)** They've yet to add the goals into most of the game. **(3)** Everything about the grounds will be replicated including the off-pitch details. **(4)** Top four-player action. **(5,6)** They've yet to add the lighting fx.



motion-capture's been left in the capable hands (and feet) of two local Sheffield lads. All of the 200 and more different motion-captures have been produced by the Sheffield United captain, David Holdsworth, and the Blades' goalkeeper, Simon Tracy, and because so many different moves have been captured, you can now perform them on the virtual pitch. So this time around it's possible to execute a full range of passes over a range of distances and not just the select few that were available in the last game. Lay offs, driven crosses, short touches and over the top passes are now all executable at the touch of a button and a little skill. The look and control of the player's on-the-ball movements aren't the only thing on the gameplay front that have been

improved though. The player selection has been worked on to calm down the computer when it comes to swapping control from player to player in a what regular players of virtual football will recognise at a constant nigggle. The Artificial Intelligence of the computer players has been greatly enhanced too, with offside traps working much more effectively, and more intelligent goalies, removing the 'own goal syndrome' which at times plagued the previous *Actua*.

If there was any specific area in which *Actua 2* was let down, it was in the amount and scope of the available options – you could only play as international teams in a limited number of competitions. This time around though, they've redressed the balance, with 25 different leagues to play in and

THIS TIME AROUND THERE ARE 25 DIFFERENT LEAGUES AND SEVERAL DIFFERENT CUP EVENTS.

several different types of cup competition. There's a vastly improved practice section too, with the option to practise penalties (England take note), free kicks and other set piece situations.

There's a grand total over 450 different teams to master, each with the correct player names and individually designed home and away kits, ensuring that they look as they should do in real life. Hopefully, each player will play as they do in real life too, as each one of the 10,000 plus that are packed into the game has been



(1) Injuries play a much bigger part in the AS3. **(2)** Look, even Gremlin use the same ball as us. **(3)** That glow around the players is pre-production glitching – so's the mad hair.

PREPLAY

[1,2,3] The tackling system has been greatly improved. This sounds great but remember you're going to have to be more careful when you make the tackles. Any like this one below and it's an early bath for you my lad. Be carefull.



top players also get their heads and bodies perfectly recreated and put into the game, and we're assured that Peter Beardsley isn't one of them. Phew.

Thanks to the comprehensive motion-capture, players will look smoother and slicker than ever before, though international stars watch out – shot by a sniper in row Z type dives have not been motion-captured. There's no need to put up with the huge number of teams and players that are available either, because each team and player is fully customisable, right down to the last detail, allowing for fans of the lower league teams to guide their team to victory, albeit in a football league of make believe.

The players aren't the only ones to have been lucky enough to receive a makeover in this latest

painstakingly researched and rated according to their performances in real life last season and, where applicable, during the World Cup. Don't select Stan Collymore when you're playing as Aston Villa then. As if that wasn't enough though, just as in *Actua Soccer 2*, 50 lucky



SHOT DEAD BY A SNIPER SITTING IN ROW Z TYPE DIVES HAVE NOT BEEN MOTION-CAPTURED

game either, because the stadia that you play in have been given a complete facelift. It's possible to play the game in any one of over 30 real-life stadia, all of which have been perfectly recreated, right down to the last detail, although that depends on what your idea of the last detail is and how well you know the stadium in question. Though, with luck and close observation, it may even be possible to see innocents being escorted from Old Trafford for standing up (let's hope). Some of the world's finest stadia will be on show, including Wembley, Barcelona's Nou Camp, and the Olympic Stadium in Munich.

Presentation and aesthetics



[1,2,3] The tackles now include a huge range from clumsy to downright nasty. And the refs are better.

Actua Soccer 3

(1) [Insert David Beckham caption here]
 (2) They've even included shoulder charges.
 (3,4,5,6) It's refreshing to see the goalies are better than before.



(1,2) As ever, the action can be replayed from pretty much any angle you could wish for. (3) As you can see, the game is quite early so there are loads of things yet to go in. Some nets would be a good idea.

have always been sore spots with *Actua* games too - the last effort was positively rough around the edges when it came to the option and title screens. Although these additions are not entirely vital, they do make the game a greater and more satisfying experience all round. Put quite simply, the last game lacked all the pomp and ceremony that a game like *World Cup 98* managed to carry off so well (although we're not so keen on the resulting gargantuan loading times of EA's finest). That's being

comfortably addressed in this effort though, and there's been a conscious decision to make *Actua Soccer 3* a much more fulfilling experience than the last game, with plenty of TV-style presentation silkiness. Last season's two big commentary signings, Barry Davies and Trevor Brooking, haven't been confirmed for kick off this time around, and with the Bosman ruling, they could be snapped up by anyone, but our money's on the *Actua Soccer* team to sign them up with plenty of time to spare before the transfer deadline. Des is beyond Gremlin's budget - although during the summer he was appearing on ITV more than he was presenting the matches, remember the plant food ads?

Despite the undoubtedly tough opposition that the PlayStation market has to offer in terms of

BARRY DAVIES AND TREVOR BROOKING HAVEN'T BEEN CONFIRMED THIS TIME AROUND...

football games, *Actua Soccer 3* looks as if it's well prepared to take on the best of them, and possibly even snatch the crown for itself. The series has always offered a different experience to the other games out there, and with any luck, this next game should build on that wave of deserved success, and serve up yet another very tasty *Actua* treat.

Dave Perrett



- Over 30 all-new, perfectly recreated stadia from around the world
- Smoother and more comprehensive motion-capture data
- The well known and well respected *Actua* name

POINTS

- Another *Actua* game
- More unsavoury camera angles?
- No big license, no official competitions

ADVANCE WARNING

Although *Actua Soccer 3* looks set to free itself from the traditional *Actua* chains, some real queries do remain. The camera angles can't be as difficult to get used to as they were in the first two games, and the goalkeepers can't be so stupidly bad that they concede own goals all the time either.

PREPLAY



There was a world before PlayStation, and *Sensible Soccer* bestrode it like a mighty colossus. With tiny sprites. Can it rule in the late nineties?

If you or anyone you knew ever had a Commodore 64 then you've may have seen *Microprose Soccer*, the best football game around at the time. Sensible Software were the developers. That was back in 1988, and the first *Sensible Soccer* duly appeared four years later gracing the Amiga, Atari ST, Mega Drive and Super Nintendo. Since then several updates have been released, breaching the PC market along the way, but little of the game's original



1 It's the familiar blimp-cam view, with the new polygonal players - noew with legs. **2** Replay...



gameplay changed – thankfully. *Sensible Soccer* is a legend in the world of football videogames. The Bobby Moore to *ISS 98*'s Michael Owen, if you like.

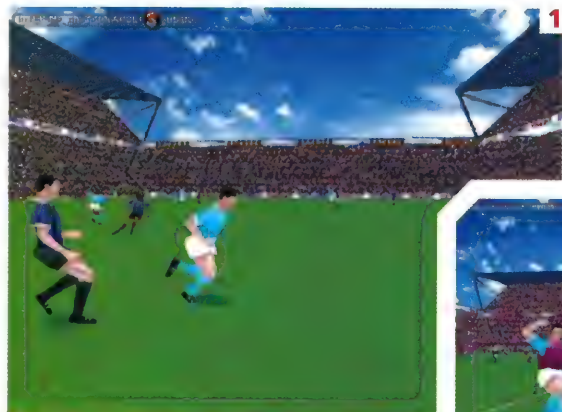
Not that it lacked pace. The joy of *Sens*' was mastering the simple but sometimes tricky controls to the point of being able to accurately ping the ball across and down the field with accuracy, thanks largely to the speed of the ball mechanics and, yes, that super wide blimp view. Lovely stuff, it was.

Now, finally, Sensible Software are ready to bring their most famous offspring to the world of

32-bit consoles. About time too.

When we asked him to explain what made *Sensible Soccer* such a enduringly popular game, Sensible Software's legendary Director of Development Jon Hare was typically bullish. 'Playability, Accessibility, Easy to learn hard to master, always scoring different goals, great

PLAYABILITY,
ACCESSIBILITY, EASY TO
LEARN, HARD TO MASTER,
ALWAYS SCORING...



1 Textures won't be a strong point. **2** Motion-capture will. **3** He must score...



■ PUBLISHER:	Sensible Software	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ DEVELOPER:	Sensible Software	■ STYLE:	Classic
■ RELEASE DATE:	TBC	■ PLAYERS:	Two

(1) The camera zooms in for set pieces and replays. Frankly, it looks like it might as well not bother. **(2)** You'll be selecting teams and players from countless statistically correct leagues. **(3)** The keeper makes a fine diving stop. **(4)** The quick counter attack. **(6)** Another shot. **(3)** Mincer!



with a bunch of mates, always leaves you wanting more... just like a good woman. Not sure about the bunch of mates bit though.'

He's not what you'd call shy, Jon Hare. Or small. He's an imposing figure, with backroom programmer's hair (long, generally tied-back) and a chunky physique. Think of Meat Loaf on Slim Fast and you're getting close. The boy's CV goes way back to 1985 when he started working for a company called LT Software, producing *Sodov The Sorcerer* and *Twister* for the rapidly flowering Spectrum market.

So why was it *Sensi Soccer* that had such an impact and continues to be remembered fondly? 'Because it happened to be very, very good at what it was made to do', asserts Hare, 'It was probably the most advanced football game to use

sprite based graphics, and getting great gameplay in 2D was something we had almost mastered at the time it came out.' Too right.

Length of service allows Jon Hare to take a long, wide view of the most recent advances in football games, and *Sensible Soccer's* revered status ensures that when he speaks, we listen. 'Unquestionably the development of 3D visuals and motion-capture techniques has made better looking games, but I also feel that it has created a number of new problems concerning gameplay and the linking of animations.'

Motion-capture, for instance, has been providing the programming team with more than a few headaches in the last year or so, as they attempt to bring *Sensible Soccer g8* up to speed.

MOTION-CAPTURE HAS BEEN PROVIDING THE PROGRAMMING TEAM WITH A FEW HEADACHES

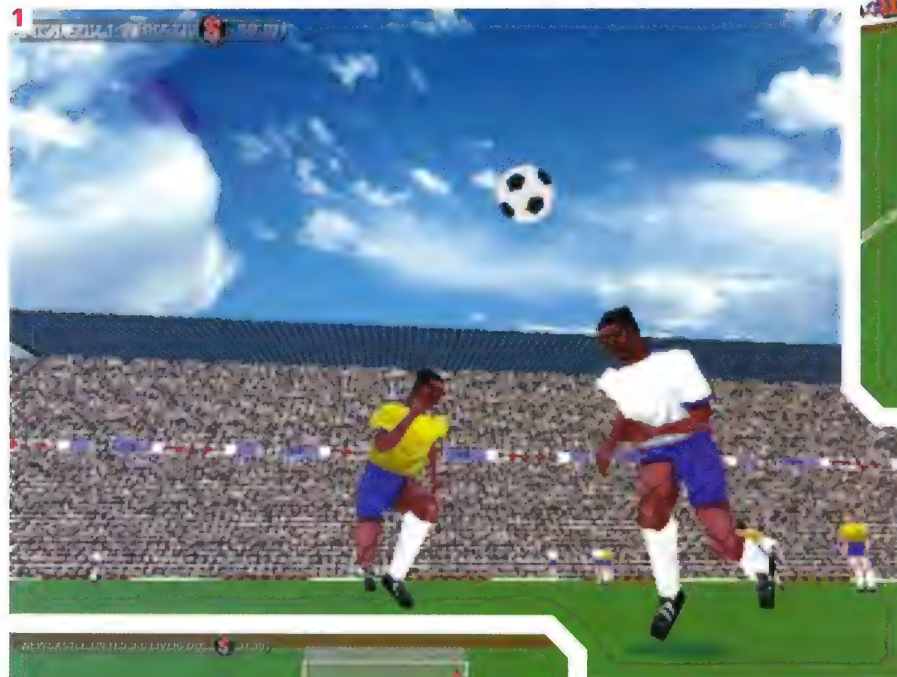
Typically, Jon's first priority is gameplay. 'A very long piece of motion-capture with a great model can look fantastic,' he agrees, 'but good responsive gameplay necessitates the motion-capture being split up into loads of little pieces so that it can change in the middle of a motion more quickly to respond to the movement of the joypad or keyboard by the player. This process is very complicated, so retaining control over the rotation and offset of each frame of motion-capture in relation to the previous frame of motion-capture and



(1) Blackburn all at sea. **(2)** The Cameroonians struggling against Argentina and... **(3)** An attractive fixture between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Swindon Town. Planet Football, eh...

PREPLAY

(1) Sensible Software have struggled mightily to justify the resurrection. We're waiting. **(2)** Cruciate ligaments on tast, anyone? **(3)** The defender stood in the goal doesn't seem to be too fussed whether it goes in or not. Must be Nigerian.



HOW DO YOU MAKE A SUPERFICIALLY PRIMITIVE GAME ATTRACTIVE TO PLAYSTATION OWNERS?

are well aware of. 'After the massive sales and critical acclaim of the original criticisms will come in 2 main categories' says Hare. 'Sensible virgins will say "This game doesn't look like the telly when you play it, the players are too small." Our answer is; yes, we know that, we've pulled out the camera angle deliberately so you can actually see the player who you are passing to. *Sensi* die-hards will say "but it doesn't play exactly like the original and I preferred the old graphics and it's just not the same." Answer: Of course it's not exactly the same, but give it a while and you'll realise it is as close as we could get and in many ways it plays and lot better than

else to treat each player like a 3D sprite where we can go straight from any one frame of motion-capture to any other and at any offset. But both these solutions at the moment are unfeasible for reasons of memory space in the first instance and being too brain bustingly complicated to keep track of in the second, at least with current tools available anyway. But I am sure we will get there in the end and when we do the results will be awesome.'

Technical difficulties aside, the one thing that seems to have delayed an update is the thorny issue of exactly how to make such a superficially simple football game attractive to PlayStation owners more accustomed to a slew of camera angles and a TV style 3D view of the action. Potential criticism is something that Sensible

making sure that such offset both looks good to the eye and feels good from a playability point of view is a very, very hard balance to strike.

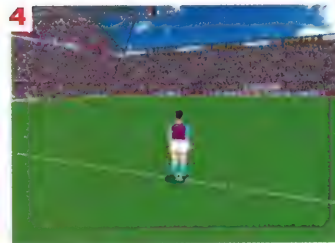
'The playability wants the motion-capture frame to jump around like sprites used to. But the enhanced graphical definition demands more realistic movement from a visual point of view and the extra dimension of rotation compounds this problem. Striking the balance between quick movement and graphical slickness is the key to motion-capture/3D. I feel eventually what we need to do is to control each frame of motion-capture at each rotation and at each magnification like we used to control old fashioned sprites. Or



(1) The wide view means you'll be able to see your tactics unfolding in real-time. **(3)** Heads up.

Sensible Soccer 98

(1) Formation football. **(2)** And again. **(3)** The 'seet spots' of old have been rectified, apparently. We liked them. **(4)** Bless him. **(5)** The goalie goes down folishy early. Ooer.



camera angles, but not during controlled play. Set-pieces and replays will cause the camera to swing down from its blimp to show the players doing their 3D stuff.

Even from on high the polygon players are a world apart from their sprite predecessors, doing their fluid football thing, to convincing effect. The control system has been tweaked too, but will still be on the simple side of charming.

The only addition to the usual time charged shots and passes is a turbo/tackle button which Sensible freely admit was inspired by ISS.

As the series progressed it also became something of a statistical and tactical powerhouse, something which Sensible are obviously keen to capitalise on. Despite the fact that the players will have mangled Shoarer/Böckham/Ewen style names, there'll be, according to Hare 'the most amazing on-pitch Coaching Editor you've ever seen.' This facility is so detailed that you

the original. It certainly looks better. Some people give a knee-jerk reaction to change. We're sure that it is no coincidence that the first few e-mails we got after the release of the new PC version were from old fans moaning that it was not what they expected and that they were unhappy with this, but these e-mails gradually subsided and gave way to much encouraging praise for the game from those people who allowed themselves a couple of days to familiarise themselves with it.'

The game *will* feature 3D

AS IT PROGRESSED THE SERIES BECAME SOMETHING OF A STATISTICAL POWERHOUSE...

can even decide how far your keeper comes off his line.

All well and good, but why (oh why, oh why) didn't Sensible Software tide us over with a faithful retro emulation of *Sensible World Of Soccer*, the game's previous best incarnation? 'We tried twice to make this happen' huffs Hare 'but both times it was thought by the powers that be that the game was to retro to work on such a progressive platform, if people want it that badly they should write to Sony'. We might just do that.

Will Groves



(1) Liverpool's all-time first team. The best of the best, you could say. **(2)** Another goal? Answers on a postcard, please. **(3)** Breakdancing won't help you now. **(4)** A headed attempt from an awful long way out.



POINTS

- That heritage should mean gameplay, gameplay and more gameplay
- It's about time we had a version to call our own

POINTS

- Top down view may not be to some tastes
- Tactics editor may be fiddly accessed through a joystick

ADVANCE WARNING

The PC version recieved a lukewarm reception initially, but soon won over the die-hards. If the speed can be maintained for PlayStation (and why shouldn't it?) then we're looking at a real breath of fresh air -- can't wait, basically.

Viva Football

Virgin's effort is heavily based on World Cup football. Could it be too late for *Viva* or does extra time glory beckon?

Blimey! 1033 teams should be more than enough to satisfy the most demanding of statos. The teams are taken from 40 years of World Cup football, from 1958 to France '98. Virgin Interactive's Simon Humber told us 'All the great players of the modern era are in the game – the likes of Pele, Maradonna, Cruyff, Beckenbauer, Charlton and anyone else you care to name. This gives us a total of over 16,000 players, rated in 16 categories that affect his speed, shooting ability, passing,



tackling, awareness of space, stamina etc.'. Impressive stats, we're sure you'll agree, and perhaps a job big enough to explain the way the game's sailed past its scheduled pre-France release date. In any case, updated stats will now be included in the cold post-tournament light of day.

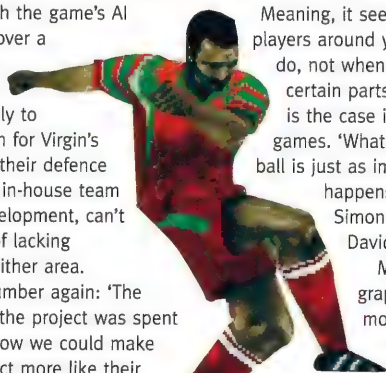
In truth though, it seems that problems with the game's AI (which took over a year alone) and engine are more likely to be the reason for Virgin's tardiness. In their defence Crimson, the in-house team handling development, can't be accused of lacking ambition in either area.

Simon Humber again: 'The early part of the project was spent working on how we could make our players act more like their real life counterparts, rather than the usual computer game interpretations. In this period we went to lot of games and developed the 'Spatial AI' which keeps players in their position,

but allows them variation in their movement.'

Meaning, it seems, that the players around you move as you do, not when you reach certain parts of the pitch, as is the case in most other games. 'What goes on off the ball is just as important as what happens on it' insists Simon. Go and ask David Beckham.

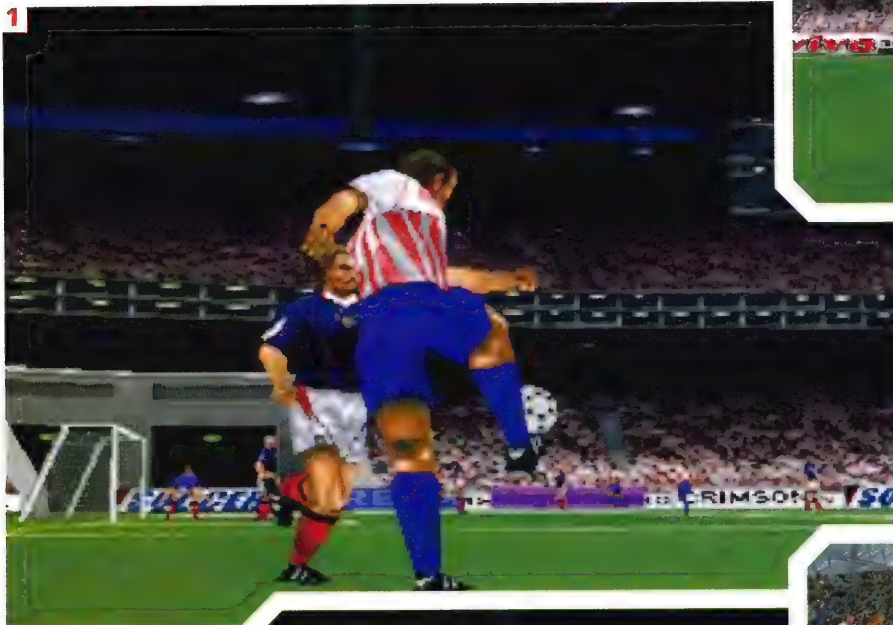
More typically, the graphics are heavily motion-capture based, with multiple members of Barnet FC's squad supplying the motion. Nothing special about that, you might think, but Virgin claim that many of the star names merely turn up for photo shoots, while they had



[1-3] Despite our early concerns Virgin assure us that this is going to be a corker. Fancy that.

■ PUBLISHER:	Virgin	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ DEVELOPER:	Crimson	■ AGE RESTRICTIONS:	None
■ RELEASE DATE:	TBC	■ STYLE:	Arcade

(1) It looks very good close up. (2) A Brazilian... In a football game? Surely you jest. (3) It's a penalty. (4) It's a goal. Surely. (5) That man's showing his wrists, like a girl. (6) If. I. Can. Just. Get. My. Fingers. To. It... oh. (7) Ooooooooooooo!



full access to several players. Mmmm. They also claim that their overall system, which involves 'joining two motion-capture systems together' is the most advanced and realistic yet seen in a football game. 'It's the first thing you'll notice in *Viva*' claims Humber. 'We also used Jim Henson's Creature Shop, rather than buying a system

ourselves and trying to work out how to use it.' Money to burn or inspired use of experienced talent? Naturally, Virgin have many more bold claims for *Viva Football*. The gameplay certainly seems more fluid than many of its more 'on rails' (and more accessible) heavyweight rivals. Take it away, Mr Humber: 'The control method

allows simple passes, more ambitious passes ahead of the player and precision through balls over the top. This flexibility gives the user the feeling of having achieved it themselves rather than the 'on rails' gameplay in other titles where one button tap does all the hard work for you.' Which is where the spatial AI attempts to help you out by opening up passing angles, presumably.

Early versions we've played look slightly shabby, but Virgin promise us that plenty of polish will be applied before the game's release, and we've certainly grown to like the game as we've come to grips with the initially slightly frustrating controls.

Will Groves



POINTS

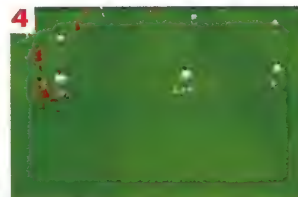
- Over 1,000 teams and 18,000 individually assessed and rated players to choose from
- Ambitious and realistic AI

POINTS

- Looks a bit ropey at the moment
- Controls could be a problem

ADVANCE WARNING

Already looking respectable, *Viva Soccer* could turn out to be rather tasty if several ambitious elements manage to gel successfully and if the 'Spatial AI' can give the flexible but simple controls a real, long-term learning curve then Virgin are on to a winner.

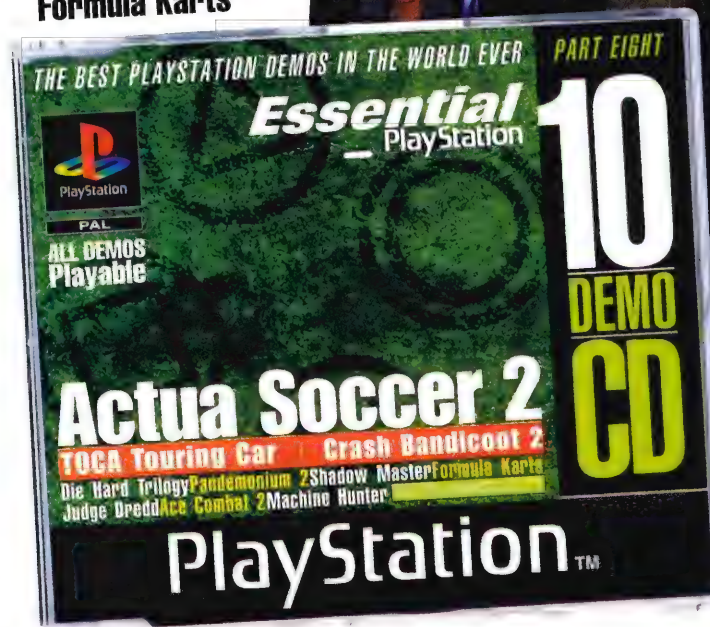


(1) Donkey! That's straight to the goalie. (2) Goalie and striker both look under a little bit of pressure there then. (3) Donkey! Or is a zebra? There, just off to the side of the screen. It's gone now. (4) Aha! A totally uncaptionable picture. How unique.

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Pandemonium 2
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Formula Karts



The best PlayStation games in the world ever...
Play them and read about them **ALL** in Part Eight

What's the score, eh? Why on earth does the videogames industry use a percentage as its standard grading system? It's ludicrous to encumber yourself with a rating of such magnitude that it seems impossible to award the ultimate mark of 100%. We'll happily award *Final Fantasy VII* and *Tomb Raider 2* the 10/10 they deserve, because they are games you must have.

A percentage gives the impression of an exact science, but you can't tell us that when a mag awards *Croc* 83% for sound, it's because the staff writer has sat in a sound-proof booth ticking through a list of 300 questions before totting up his scoresheet and applying some complex mathematical formula. We mark games out of 10. It isn't an exact science, but then it doesn't pretend to be. And it enables us to award games a perfect mark without too much headache. So there... all right?

PSM RATING

FEDERAZIONE
ITALIANA
GIUOCO CALCIO

PlayTest

REVIEWED

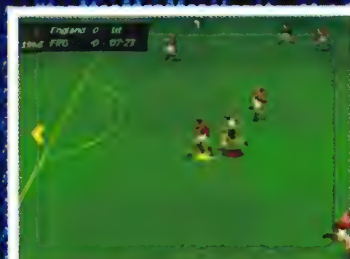


Total Football

COMMENT

Gus Hurdle writes his *Total Football* comments on all the reviews to give you an idea of what *real* footballers think about the games that try to emulate their sport. *TF* pundit, Disney Channel presenter and, until last season, Brentford defender Gus is currently hanging out with his top footy mates and playing every PlayStation football game there is, in between looking for a new club to sign with.

TF



140



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Kick Off World 82

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Small Reviews 96

ISS Pro '98

And **striding elegantly through the centre of midfield** is one of the greatest players you'll ever see. Yes, the latest incarnation of *ISS Pro* is almost here...

[1] It's quite common to find the computer defences as packed as this one. **[2]** But when you face the mighty Welsh the goals come flooding in. **[3]** The San Siro Stadium view. **[4]** With these hoardings it could be Old Trafford. **[5]** It may be out of tune but at least they sing with passion. **[6]** Hot midfield action.



While EA has been busy feathering its nest with the ubiquitous *FIFA* series of PlayStation football games, its Japanese rival Konami has quietly marshalled its resources. 'Tis over a year since Konami fashioned its first *ISS Pro* title for Sony's console and it was engineered as well as any Beckham free kick. Super visuals, fluid animation and considered gameplay marked it as a classic. However, during the close season, the soothsayers have suggested that EA's *World Cup 98* has become the definitive PlayStation soccer sim. Not any more, sport...

In football manager speak, Konami is firing a warning shot across EA's bows with the release of *ISS Pro '98*. Although *World Cup 98* serves notice of its intent with flawless presentation and a splendid introductory sequence, *ISS '98* panders not to such sleeve-tugging finery. Drop in the disc and before you know it, veteran BBC commentator Tony Gubba has pitched up and is on the mike. "International Superstar Soccer Pro '98," he says, somewhat obviously, by means of introduction. Then: "Hello, I'm Tony Gubba." Hey, it might not be Des, Gary, Chris and Motty, but who cares, it works. Although some companies have chosen to eschew commentary in favour of players shouting for the ball, you can't beat

"INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER PRO '98," TONY GUBBA SAYS, SOMEWHAT OBVIOUSLY, BY MEANS OF INTRODUCTION. THEN: "I'M TONY GUBBA".





PUBLISHER: Konami DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE DATE: September ORIGIN: Japan
PRICE: £44.99 STYLE: Arcade



(1) The replays are the best place to watch the beautiful goals. (2) This game pits the best of Europe against the Rest of the World. You can have a lot of fun spotting all the players. (3) Use this screen often. (4) The stadiums are much more realistic than before. (5) The Paraguay player must score. (6) Go on lad, lunge or he'll pass. (7) Handle the ball now and it's a penalty. (8) Shoot! (9) Can he get there? (10) A soft header should slot it past the goalkeeper. (11) More top midfield action. (12) The computer players seem to be able to score from any angle - lucky sods.



[1] Another game against Estonia? [2] Those bloody defenders again. [3] He's in the clear. Shoot! [4] The goalie's view. [5] Scoring from an angle is a skill best learnt early. [6] Corners are great places to score.



the dozens of *Match of the Day* rattling on. It might get repetitive, but it's better than an incomprehensible, strangled yelp, or a gruff grunt.

Those familiar with the original *ISS Pro* will immediately feel comfortable here. Ostensibly, the premise is much the same. The players are big, chunky fellows, though considerably more rounded than the angular polygons of their forebears. At first glance, the visuals don't seem a great step forward from last year's model, and it's only when you play the original and the '98 incarnation back-to-back that you realise just how much they've been improved upon. The detail on the strips is incredible (you can pick out all the stripes and even the badges, kit fans!) and the crowd and stadia are more lifelike than before.

So too, has the animation been powdered off to a shine. Indeed, as software companies get to grips with

THE DETAIL ON THE STRIPS IS INCREDIBLE (YOU CAN PICK OUT ALL THE STRIPES AND EVEN THE BADGES, KIT FANS!) AND THE STADIA ARE BETTER THAN EVER.

FAMOUS PLAYERS IN THE GAME

It's all very well chatting to your mates about how good at footy you are, at the end of the day though, when the lights are low... you want to be The Greatest Player In The World...



BAGGIO

Okay, so he's not got the ponytail anymore but he's still bloody marvellous.



BERGKAMP

He had a fantastic World Cup - it's shame he didn't get to the final.



KLINSMANN

Looks like age finally caught up with this jolly German. He was good tho'.



RAVENELLI

Judging by their performance Italy could have done with Ravva.



VALDERRAMA

There are rumours that this big-haired guy is 39 years old. He played like it.

ISS Pro '98

STADIUMS

It's not who you play, it's where you play... if anybody ever tells you this slap them in the face for such an obvious and contrived untruth. Believe them and you're doomed to a life of uncertainty and self-doubt. Possibly.



SOUTH AMERICA

This ground looks like a small version of the 200,000 capacity Maracana.



AMERICA

The indoor arena, so loved by our burger chomping cousins. Oi! America! No!



AFRICA

Small grounds like this one often look crap but they're great places to watch sport.



EUROPE

A broad, elegant sweep of our beloved Wembley - the home of football. Beautiful.



ASIA

Looking at this the coders must have visited the Hong Kong stadium.



motion-capture technology, their experience on previous titles is brought to bear on the sequels, and now we're reaping the benefits. The player movement is the most realistic yet, although the nature of such fare means their limbs move rather too quickly. But on the slow motion replay, after a goal has been scored, the movement is spot on. Here, when the players are running with the ball, it looks like the ball is rolling on the grass rather than stuck between their feet, a untidy feature of many other soccer games. ISS '98 has a better frame rate and a smoother, more realistic feel - as any sequel should.

Once again, the game features international teams from across the globe, and once again, Konami has used almost-but-not-quite-real player names, presumably

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO PICK OUT SOME OF THE STARS SUCH AS RONALDO AND BERGKAMP - THE PROGRAMMERS HAVE LOVINGLY RECREATED THEM.

PlayTest



[1] Throwing the ball deep into the heart of defence is a very effective way to score goals. [2] Sometimes the goalies aren't that good. [3,4] The stadiums do look dramatic at night. [5] It's tricky getting away with fouling the goalie. [6,7,8] The best way to succeed is to start the game slowly in mid-field then let the strikers burst into the box. [9] More singing. [10] Once they score they start to show off. [11] The keeper's stranded, they must score.

ISS Pro '98

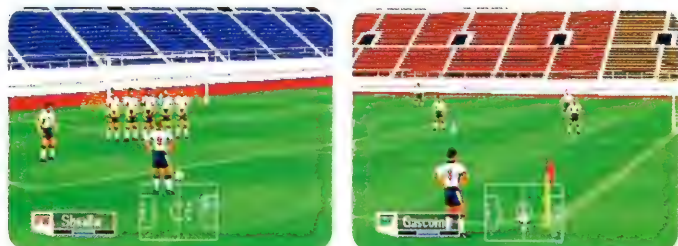


- [1] Passing the ball to the goalie is a great way of getting out of trouble. [2] Free kicks can be very effective in the right hands... feet. [3] Yet another yellow card.

because of some licensing arrangement. Nonetheless, you'll be able to pick out some of the star names such as Bergkamp and Ronaldo, because the programmers have lovingly recreated their look. This can be a useful pointer during a game because each of the players and teams are rated on speed, passing, shooting and the like, and if you spot, say, Ronaldo making a break, you know it's worth giving him the ball. Because of the false player names, Gubba's commentary doesn't include the

TRAINING

Just like the very best beat-em-ups, *ISS Pro '98* thrives on technique and provides the facilities to improve yours...



Each team is rated in five categories; power, speed, technique, attack and defence. You can train with any of the squads in the game to develop your ability, as well as get to know the relative worth of the players from a particular side. In the 'Training' option, one team appears on the pitch and you simply knock the ball around. It's a particularly useful facility for practising corners. Also, you can change formations if you want to discover the nuances of the sweeper system. You get the idea...

VIEWS

Like every good football game, *ISS Pro '98* is crammed with top quality views. To see which one you like check out our favourites.



MEDIUM

The second best view. If it has a fault it's that you can't see many of your other players.



VERTICAL

This view looks good enough in pictures but it does slow the gameplay down somewhat.



ZOOM

This view is for those of you who like to be right in the middle of the action. Tricky to play though.



FAR

The best view of the lot giving the gamer much more choice as you can see all the pitch.

names, so he tends to shout things like: "It's a great goal." This time around, Konami has included a player edit facility which enables you to pop in the real names of your favourites, should you deem it necessary.

But enough of the niceties. What makes *ISS Pro '98* such a great game to play is its simplicity. There are very few things you need to know in order to play the game. A neat, pass-to-feet option works a treat, you can play long balls, and more importantly, through balls. Add in the shooting, heading, tackling and speed-up feature (using one of the shoulder buttons) and you've just about cracked it. But not quite...

Within this simple premise of a few buttons, is an incredible range of tactical nuances. There are over a dozen formations from which to choose, and an on-screen option to press players into a particular third of the pitch. *ISS '98* is one of the very few videogames where it seems to pay to know the subject. It's a game that football aficionados will love, because you can build



- [1] The goalies are very good and don't often let you down. [2] The flag lets you know which way you're shooting in case you forget.

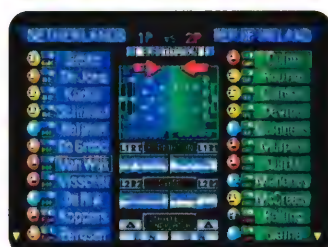
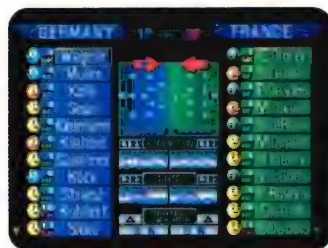


YOU HAVE TO WORK OPENINGS
AND WHEN YOU DO REGISTER,
YOU KNOW HOW YOU DID IT...
OFTEN AS NOT YOU'LL SETTLE
FOR A DINK OVER THE KEEPER.

moves in such a realistic fashion. For instance, patting the triangle button produces a through ball, which is a pass that rolls a couple of yards in front of a player. Often as not, you relinquish possession, but when played with poise, it can negate three or four defenders and put your attacker in on goal. If you know anything about real football, you should be able to build more effective moves than someone who doesn't.

Scoring isn't arbitrary. You have to work openings and when you do register, you know how you did it. This may seem an obvious, rather trite point, but those

STRATEGY



For a game that is instantly playable, *ISS '98* has a slew of options for the strategic planning of your formation. Each player's name has a 'smiley' icon next to it, which can be one of five colours, depending on his fitness. If it's red, he's fighting fit, if it's grey, swap him for another player. Each player is rated on six abilities, with a mark out of 10. There are 16 formations to choose from, and an on-screen scanner shows you each player's starting position. Within these formations, you can choose between three styles of play; Line, Sweeper or Libero. During the game, you can move the bulk of your players into one of three areas of the pitch by pressing the Select button. An on-screen bar shows you which position they're in. Clever stuff.

[1] In case you couldn't work it out, the player with the thing over his head has the ball. [2] This game loves good mid-field work. [3] The keepers can save with any part of their body. [4] Extreme man marking. [5] Come on lads, sing yer hearts out.

ISS Pro '98

OLDIES

For Every Ronaldo or Owen, there's a Pele or a Greaves, and for every *ISS Pro '98* or *World Cup 98* there are these fellers...

Sensible World of Soccer (Amiga)



This seminal title remains a shining example of just how great football games can be. The designers, Jon Hare and Chris Chapman, had been inspired by Dino Dini's *Kick Off* games but were sure they could improve on them. They did. *Sensible Soccer* allowed you to fizz the ball around the pitch and use gallons of aftertouch to bamboozle opponents. You could play neat, short passing manoeuvres or hoof the ball straight to your strikers. Bloody magic, it was.

International Soccer (Commodore 64)



International Soccer is perhaps remembered mainly for being one of the few games to utilise Commodore's cartridge system. To describe the graphics as basic is an understatement, but for their time they were decent. The sprites were huge, taking up quite a lot of the screen and the kits were often a dreadful hue – you could have a team in sickly pale blue versus a side bedecked in salmon pink. However, it played a neat game of and remains the best of its time.

ISS (SNES)



The original SNES game and younger sibling of *Pro*, *International Superstar Soccer* remains one of the most playable sports simulations of our times. Certainly, it was the football game for the Super Famicom that *Sensible Soccer* was for the Amiga. The absolute best. The graphics were brilliant for their time and the gameplay unsurpassed. In fact, the concept isn't massively different to *ISS Pro '98*. A victory for common sense...

Kick Off (Amiga)



Back in 1989, the Amiga and ST were the home computers of choice, and Anco's masterpiece captured every gamer's heart. The top-down viewed action was furious, and the gameplay addictive. Because the game rewarded practice, skilful players wiped the floor with pretenders and competitive two-player gaming reached new heights. *Kick Off* ensured its designer, Dino Dini, a place in history. Relatively speaking, of course.



(1) With four Welsh defenders around him it should be easy work for Shereng(Nam) to slot the ball home. (2) For the very stupid everything is signalled so there's never a moment when you get lost.

who've played *World Cup 98* will have banged in many a 25-yarder and felt a tad guilty at the standard of keeping. You won't get away with speculative, long-range efforts in *ISS '98*. Not that you can't score spectacular goals, though. Headers and scissor kicks are the most satisfying means to score, but often as not, you'll settle for a neat dink over the keeper.

Many who deride *ISS Pro* do so because it seems rather slow in comparison to other PlayStation football games. It's a legitimate point, though *ISS* defenders would point to its considered gameplay in response. Konami has introduced a game speed option for '98, but while this in itself is a neat feature, inevitably, you whack it up to maximum for the two-player games. When competing on your lonesome, you may wish to

start at a slightly slower pace, because this is considerably more difficult in the one-player mode than EA's *World Cup 98* (there are five difficulties). Nonetheless, *ISS '98* ups the pace from last year's model – a Good Thing.

Can it all be good news, then? Well, just about. Undoubtedly, *ISS '98* is the best football game you can buy, because it plays the best game of football. Obviously. Untidy aspects? Not many. The ball-being-kicked sound effect is horrid – it sounds like a real pig's bladder. And some of the strips clash, so Jamaica against Brazil becomes a bit of a no-no, as do one or two other matches. However, when you play as Holland you get a brass band accompaniment, and we like that. Great stuff...

Steve Bradley

Total Football COMMENT

This is the business. The animation's bloody great – although I wasn't sure at first. But the passing, which feels a bit too calm to start off with, soon picks up and once you've got yourself into the tactical groove, tight exciting matches are always a certainty. The best footy game I've played, and I've played a few in my time.

TF

Official UK
PlayStation
Football Special

VERDICT

- GRAPHICS: 7
- GAMEPLAY: 8
- LIFESPAN: 8

TECHNIQUE

- Passing: 10
- Shooting: 8
- Tactics: 9

Unrivalled in its field, despite those who press the claims of EA's latest cut. But *ISS Pro '98* is a far better game. Believe it, and moreover, buy it. The best.

9

out of 10



(1) Isn't it strange the way the computer games never really get anywhere near the scores from the cup? **(2)** There's no need to sulk lads, you did well out there. **(3)** You can watch the goals over and over. **(4)** A scorcher!

World Cup 98

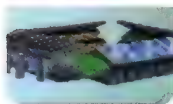
EA give you the chance to enter
beat **Argentina** over and over

the **World Cup**, play well and
and over and over...

VENUES

All the stadiums are faithfully represented in *World Cup 98* with great FMV sequences introducing each ground. They've even included our favourite bar in Bordeaux.

Saint Etienne



Geoffroy-Guichard
36,000

World Cup 98 is the culmination of five years' work, and, with hindsight, it is apparent earlier FIFA titles were warm-ups. Just as Hoddle fielded an experimental side against Chile with less than successful results, so EA used FIFA 97 and *Road to World Cup* to iron out any final problems. It's just handy for EA that the realm of videogames is not home to the same fickle hand of fate that affects the England squad any time they go to penalties in an important match.

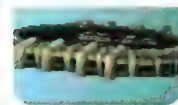
Presentation has always been of paramount importance in FIFA games, but *World Cup 98* breaks new ground. The game opens with Chumbawumba's *Tubthumping* getting the proceedings off to a suitably boisterous start, while footage of the game's 10 stadia and classic football moments are flashed on screen. EA has emulated

every aspect of televised football, duly adding to *World Cup 98*'s credibility and realism. Music from Sky Sports' 'Super Sunday' loops in the background, while Chris Waddle joins Des Lynam and John Motson in the game's commentary box.

Via its incredible presentation, *World Cup 98* immediately comes across as the definitive game of the tournament. It is as slick and polished as anything the BBC or Sky produce, and was the perfect accompaniment to the event. The FIFA endorsement means that every player and team is on offer (even those who failed to make the last 32), with each built around genuine world rankings. But EA goes far beyond that. It's great that you can be Shearer or Ronaldo, but *World Cup 98* takes even the smallest factors into account. Kick off times correspond with those of the real tournament, and matches take place in the correct grounds. In the

VENUES

Bordeaux



Felix-Bollaert
42,000

VENUES

Lens



Parc L'escure.
36,500 capacity



PUBLISHER:	EA	DEVELOPER:	EAC
RELEASE DATE:	Out now	AGE RESTRICTION:	None
PRICE:	£39.99	STYLE:	Arcade



(1) Despite the fact that they didn't have colour TV's then, their instant replay systems are very adept. (2) With defending like this you deserve to be losing. (3) Don't worry lad, even the best players can miss penalties.



IT'S HARD NOT TO BE IMPRESSED WHEN THE REFEREE JUMPS OVER A PASS: IT SLOTS SEAMLESSLY INTO THE FAST-PACED ACTION.

meantime, John Motson and Des Lynam are on hand with reams of information regarding qualifying, points gathered, and the weather. We defy any true football fan not to be blown away by the presentation as the teams line up for the national anthems.

All this presentation would be for nothing though if *World Cup 98* played like Carlton Palmer. The *FIFA* series, while boasting a good variety of moves, never made you feel as if you were in control. Thankfully, this feeling of remoteness has been rectified, making *World Cup 98* a most accomplished PlayStation player.

Its success can be laid at the feet of its intuitive gameplay and plentiful options. *World Cup 98* can be

played as a basic kick 'n' run game, while veteran players can pull off all the bicycle kicks, fancy flicks and first-time volleys that come with practice. The game grows with you - its banks of options enable you to seize more control when you feel you're up to it. In a matter of minutes, crossing and heading become second nature, while tackling is an equally important, yet harder to master, skill. Indeed, stepping up to the higher control level offers a larger sense of achievement than leading one of the international clubs to victory.

A secondary - but essential - factor to *World Cup's* success is the improved intelligence of the teams and players. Players run into space, draw the defence and distribute the ball with vision and accuracy. These are all small factors missing from existing football games, and *World Cup 98* highlights just how essential they are to any game purporting to be realistic. Because of the flowing action, little touches that raised an eyebrow before now work because the game itself is so playable. It's hard not to be impressed when the referee jumps over a pass, because it happens in the context of a match scenario and seamlessly slots in with the fast-paced action.

With the basic gameplay sorted, anything else EA could add to the mix is a bonus. The attention to

CELEBRATE WITH STYLE

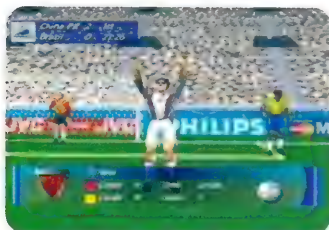
Although some celebrating players look in a great deal of pain, others are just silly: there's Jan Aage Fjortoft's famous sticking-the-arms-out-straight-and-cart-wheeling-about-like-an-idiot celebration and let's not forget the classic Shearer-like, run-towards-the-camera-and-leer-like-a-loon. Here then, are some of our favourite celebrations along with some of the more stupid ones.



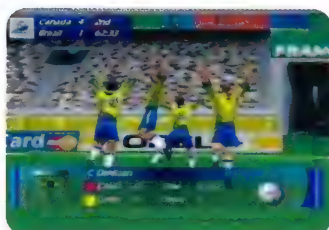
Ah, the old jumping along the line with arms aloft. Not the most imaginative but still a classic.



That's right. Celebrate like a man, none of this jumping up and down like a lass or kissing other blokes.



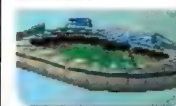
One of the greatest celebrations ever. Just standing still, no movement and arms in air. Perfect.



Given this score Brazil have little to celebrate. Still, 4-1 to Canada! NEVER going to happen!

VENUES

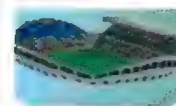
Toulouse



Stadium Municipal
37,000

VENUES

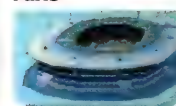
Marseille



Stade Velodrome
60,000

VENUES

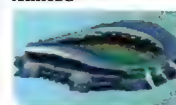
Paris



Stade de France
80,000

VENUES

Nantes



Stade de la Beaujoire - 40,000



Move your flag around the map, choose an arena and then enjoy a fly-by view.

THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER

Eight of the tournament's greatest finals are also stashed away in *World Cup 98*. On lifting the trophy, a new option is saved to Memory Card enabling you to relive past glories. Far from being just a tacked on extra, the 'Classics' mode is a celebration of old football. In contrast to today's game, the ball is heavier, and the players are a little more sluggish to control. EA has also replaced the dulcet tones of John Motson with Kenneth Wostlethume - he of the famous "They think it's all over" 1966 commentary.

1930

Uruguay

Uruguay 4

Argentina 2

In a tournament dominated by the South Americans (nine out of the 13 teams) it was little surprise the final was played out between the host nation, Uruguay, and the Argentinians in front of a hugely partisan crowd of close to 100,000 spectators.

The final Uruguayan goal was scored by Canuto. This might not sound particularly special but can you name any other one-armed world cup goalkeepers?



1934

Italy

Italy 2

Czechoslovakia 1 AET

The game was a long drawn out affair with extra time rearing its ugly head for the first time ever in a World Cup final. After full 120 minutes of football the home nation were eventually crowned World Champions thanks to a welcome goal from Schiavio.

It was during this final that fascist Italian leader Mussolini showed his recreational skills sending his squad a telegram with two options: 'Win or die.'



1938

France

Italy 4

Hungary 2

Unlike the tight draws of the modern game, back in the pre-war days the Cup finals were normally high scoring events with the fans getting full value for money and this was no different with the Italians holding on to their crown by virtue of a 4-2 scoreline.

The final was played in the very stadium where Hollywood filmed the classic final match in 'Sun With a Vengeance' Escape to Victory.



1950

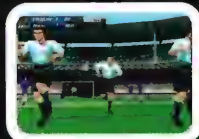
Brazil

Brazil 1

Uruguay 2

Due to some quirk of the dated FIFA system the Brazilians only needed to draw against the Uruguayans to win the Championship. Unfortunately things didn't go to plan with the Uruguayans coming back from an early goal to shatter the home fans with a last minute goal.

The Maracana stadium, with a capacity of 200,000 still holds the attendance record for this final which was watched by a crowd of 193,000 people.



1954

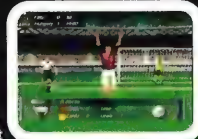
Switzerland

West Germany 3

Hungary 2

This was a close fought affair between the best team in the world at the time, Hungary, featuring the likes Puskas, and the under-rated Germans. After leading the Germans 2-0 the Magyars let their guard down giving the Germans enough space to score three goals and win.

The quarter final dispatch of Brazil by Hungary (4-2) was one of the dirtiest games in cup history with a brawl erupting in the dressing rooms.



1958

Sweden

Brazil 5

Sweden 2

That Brazil were in the final again was no surprise but the attendance of the Swedish side was a complete shock given that their team had only formed a month before the tournament. In the end this gulf in class was obvious with the Brazilians running out 5-2 winners.

This Cup saw the highest ever rate of goals by a single player with the French star Just Fontaine scoring a golden boot earning 13.



1962

Chile

Brazil 3

Czechoslovakia 1

After a series of very lucky results the Czechs edged their way into the final to take on a Brazilian team containing nine players who won the 1958 World Cup. Surprisingly the Czechs scored first but were unable to stop the Brazilian equaliser two minutes later.

The players shared the honour of the Golden Boot this time around, each of them scoring a rather lacklustre four goals.



1966

England

England 4

Germany 2

England started badly conceding a goal but soon rallied to a 2-1 lead. Then, just before the whistle, the Germans equalised. In extra-time England scored their infamous 'Russian Linesman' goal. Victory was secured when Geoff Hurst completed his hat-trick seconds before time.

The surprise of the tournament were North Korea, they beat the Italians and took a three goal lead over Portugal - who eventually won with five goals.



1970

Uruguay

Brazil 4

Italy 1

Having beaten Germany 4-3 in the Semi's Italy were expected to do very well in the final. In the end they had the misfortune to meet up with perhaps the best team ever to play the sport. The Brazilians played like football gods with all four goals scored by different players.

After Brazil were presented with the Jules Rimet trophy for winning the World Cup three times it replaced by the pedestrian sounding FIFA World Cup.



1974

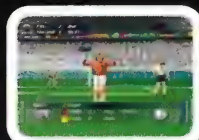
West Germany

West Germany 2

Holland 1

The final started badly for the home team with Cruyff scythed down in the penalty area and Neeskens completing the ensuing penalty. This early goal hurt the Germans who began playing like a team possessed until they scored the vital goals.

Having had by the best team by far in the World Cup, Holland nevertheless failed to make a mark in the final.



1978

Argentina

Argentina 3

Holland 1 AET

The Argentinian's made it to the final against Holland courtesy of a rather easy run up and some over friendly referees. In the final they were justifiably crowned champions beating the Dutch squad who were employing their vision of what became known as 'Total Football'.

This was the most controversial World Cup in history thanks to the host nation's fascist Junta and Amnesty International pleaded, succeeded, for a total boycott.



1982

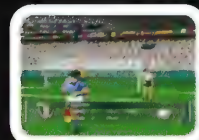
Spain

Italy 3

West Germany 1

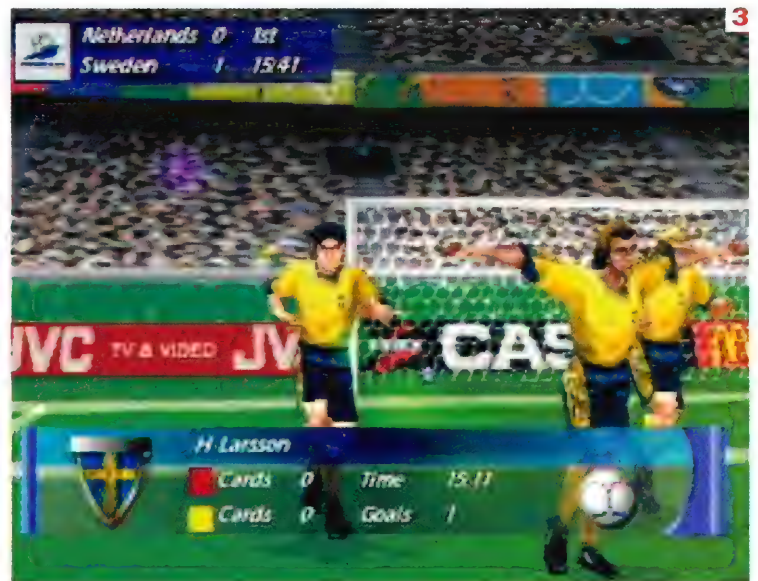
In this memorable match the Italians managed to completely out-play the Germans to run out 3-1 victors with goals from Paulo Rossi (that year's Golden Boot winner) Tardelli and Altobelli. Giving them their third ever World Cup trinket.

Spain were given lots of time to prepare for the tournament having been told by the FIFA organising body in 1964 that Spain would be the hosts.



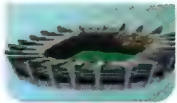
World Cup 98

[1] Goalmouth action as Brazil pressurise England. [2] The players react like their real-life counterparts when the refs whip out the cards. [3] Sweden? What the hell are they doing there? [4] Doesn't the net bulge brilliantly? [5] Like all good footballers the polygonal players take their pre-match warm up seriously. [6] Good lord, he looks bit pensive.



VENUES

Paris



Parc des Princes
45,000

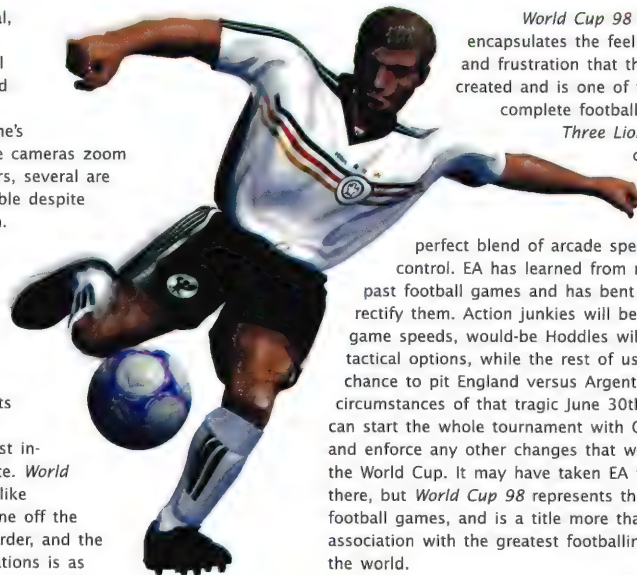
VENUES

Montpellier



Stade de la
Mosson - 37,500

► detail is phenomenal, with EA marrying an amazing level of detail to the player faces and kits without compromising the game's speed. When the game cameras zoom in for a view of players, several are immediately recognisable despite a little facial distortion. Romario and Sol Campbell look extremely cool, while Tony Adams actually benefits from rearranged features. Other minor touches include the kits getting dirtier as play progresses and the best in-game animation to date. *World Cup 98's* players look like they're barging someone off the ball or belting a 30-yarder, and the fluidity between animations is as smooth as Michael Owen's chin.



World Cup 98 is astonishing. It encapsulates the feeling of excitement and frustration that the tournament created and is one of the two most complete football game to date.

Three Lions can't hold a candle to its polish and playability and only *ISS 98* can match its

perfect blend of arcade speed and total control. EA has learned from mistakes made by past football games and has bent over backwards to rectify them. Action junkies will benefit from four game speeds, would-be Hoddles will relish the myriad tactical options, while the rest of us will revel in the chance to pit England versus Argentina in the exact circumstances of that tragic June 30th match. In fact you can start the whole tournament with Owen in the squad and enforce any other changes that we could to win the World Cup. It may have taken EA five years to get there, but *World Cup 98* represents the pinnacle of football games, and is a title more than worthy of its association with the greatest footballing showcase in the world.

Steve Merrett

VENUES

Lyon



Stade de Gerland
44,000

Total Football COMMENT

By now you must all have played or seen this game, what do you think? Times that by 10 and that's what you get when you play with four or more players. I had four mates round playing this and had a right laugh. So, if it's excitement you want then its *World Cup 98* you need.

TF

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	9
■ GAMEPLAY:	9
■ LIFESPAN:	10

TECHNIQUE

■ Passing:	8
■ Shooting:	9
■ Tactics:	8

Official UK
PlayStation
Football Special

It may have taken five years, but EA's perseverance has finally produced the ultimate football game. Truly worthy of the World Cup name.

9
out of 10

MR FIFA SPEAKS...

There are important people in the PlayStation industry, and one of them is the feller in charge of EA Sports' footy range. We travelled to Canada to interview Bruce McMillan.

P SM: First off, do you think you could try and describe your job to our readers?

BM: I'm a 'Corporate Vice President, Executive Producer'. I'm responsible for several key businesses within EA Studios in multiple locations throughout the world, including our Worldwide Soccer business. I'm based in our Canadian Studio in Vancouver. I spend lots of time in Europe. England is my second home.

PSM: Ah, so it was you who was responsible for designing FIFA way back on the 16-bit machines then?

What was the original brief when EA Sports decided to develop a football game back then?

BM: I think it is a complete misrepresentation to say any product in our industry was designed solely by one individual. I had the central vision and lead a team in both Canada and the United Kingdom that contributed to the design of the first FIFA. The EA Sports brief was simple, "We aren't in Football, we want to be in football. Bruce go make it happen." I continue to set the overall direction of FIFA, but it continues to be designed by a group of truly talented individuals.

PSM: Here on the magazine we believe you've managed to get the presentation just right, but what, if anything, do you think you've got to improve on?

BM: FIFA for me has always been a journey, mostly because of the forever changing hardware targets and people I get to work with or be around. I remember saying to the team on the first FIFA, "OK, we're done let's ship it." Did we create the best soccer game ever? I think so at that time, but we weren't done yet, and our visions for future FIFAs were already well underway. We're very proud of what we've accomplished on RTWC and WC 98, but this team is driven, super critical of themselves and the products and will surely create new standards of success in the future with FIFA.

PSM: How long does it take from starting on a new FIFA game to seeing it arrive on the high street shelves?

BM: Building FIFA products is similar these days to small movie budgets and productions. Over 150 people in 'EA's World' contribute to the product iterations. Many of the more complicated elements like the Artificial Intelligence, the render engines and the Commentator Play by Play are multiple year developments involving both the R&D area and the main SKU teams.

PSM: Is there a lot of pressure from FIFA to get the game spot on and has there ever been anything they've made you take out of the game like the NHL did with the fighting in NHL '97?

BM: Yes but FIFA have been absolutely incredible to work with. I credit that to their professionalism and expertise in football. Their consistent message to me is 'bring to interactive media the real feeling and sense that makes soccer the greatest sporting event on this planet'.

That's our charter. In terms of taking stuff out of the game, we once had several players from South American clubs falling down for no apparent reason in the penalty area in the product and though they agreed it was probably pretty realistic they asked us if we could focus on 'FIFA Fair Play' and sportsmanship.

PSM: Which game do you think gets closest to the real feel of playing football on the park with your mates?

BM: Biased Answer: FIFA. Unbiased Answer: FIFA. Honest Answer: Bet you know the answer.

PSM: Aside from the EA Sports games, which you so obviously love, which other PlayStation games do you like playing?

BM: I'm a huge driving enthusiast and game fanatic. I wore out several CDs in the early days...

consumed with Ridge Racer. These days I'm playing a lot of Gran Turismo.



World Cup 98

WE ONCE HAD SEVERAL PLAYERS FROM SOUTH AMERICAN CLUBS FALLING DOWN FOR NO APPARENT REASON IN THE PENALTY AREA IN THE PRODUCT AND THOUGH THEY AGREED IT WAS PROBABLY PRETTY REALISTIC THEY ASKED US IF WE COULD FOCUS ON 'FIFA FAIR PLAY' AND SPORTSMANSHIP.

[1] Look! That Hernandez fella - he's got his hair tied back like a girl! [2] Yet another one of those missed chances. [3] Not many of these blokes are going to be setting the modeling world alight methinks.



Three Lions

With the FA selling licences for **Official Supermarkets**, **Official Toothpaste** and **Official Fast Food** (sorry, restaurant) it was only a matter of time before we were given an **Official Football game**.



Since the dawn of time, well the 1986 World Cup, software houses have been battling over the licences for the top football tournaments. For those not lucky enough to grab the Big Ones there have always been a few other choice licences able to make the public buy the game by the thousand. So after the official game of World Cup '98 here's the official game of the England Team. And do you know what? It doesn't even include the best football song ever!

What else is missing?

Let's get this out of the way right now, *Three Lions* isn't that good. Challenging, innovative, and frustrating in equal measure, it's a disappointing release that introduces several interesting ideas yet never manages to meld them into one coherent product. Your style of play has to be so measured - you need to build attacks, drawing out defences before making a killer pass, co-ordinating attacks rather than hitting and hoping. There are very few 'sweet spots' that yield big goal crops, and AI-controlled opponents are wise to the wiles of the long-ball game. Instinctive play can lead to a certain amount of success but, ultimately, you have to think about your play. And, more importantly, learn *how* to play.

Tackle *Three Lions* as though it's another *FIFA* and you'll fail to beat all but the most useless human opponents, let alone its ultra-tough console-controlled teams. Simply charging down the field will see a host of defenders and midfielders close you down, while simple passes to feet will fail to create gaps in all but the most naive of back lines.

It's for this reason that many will, deservedly, view *Three Lions* unfavourably. The game's one-touch passing system, for example, is satisfactory but never brilliant. Sure, it's easy enough to knock the ball from player to player but more often than not the move breaks down courtesy of an unwanted, and



ANYONE FOR BOMBA 98?



So this is supposed to be the game for all England fans eh? So why the hell does it feature the rather un-English names of Andreas Kopke, Gianfranco Zola and Oliver Beirhoff on the loading screen? That's because it's only a special England game over here in the UK, over on the continent it's just another game. Cheeky sods. Oh well, at least we got the best name of the lot. Just consider these - in Italy it's known as *Bomba 98*, in Spain it's *Mundiales 98* but the poor old French know it as *Pro-Foot Contest 98*. Just look at the smug visage of French captain Didier Deschamps. Doesn't he look proud of himself? Bet he's never played it in his life.



PUBLISHER:	Take 2	DEVELOPER:	Z-Axis
RELEASE DATE:	Out now	AGE RESTRICTION:	None
PRICE:	£44.99	STYLE:	Arcade



[1] Free kicks give players a great deal of freedom – you can pass to any position on the field. **[2]** A Shearer goal in the making? **[3]** A goal kick, no less. **[4]** Herein lies a tale: t'would seem Scholes been trying his luck... **[5]** A somewhat ambitious header.



ill-timed backheel. Tap X before the ball reaches a player and he'll immediately shift it in any indicated direction. Hit the button twice and control remains with the player who made the pass, a final press making a return ball. Rather than limiting team members to passing in the general direction they're facing, you can alter the intended recipient of any kick by cycling through targets with the triangle button. This enables you to make more varied

and unpredictable attacks. It's an unwieldy feature and mastering, if you can be bothered, it is a chore devoid of any pleasure whatsoever.

Three Lions subscribes to the now standard approach to mid-air shots. If the circle, square or even X button is pressed while the ball is in the air, the receiving player makes immediate, decisive, contact. The results vary, depending on the position of the ball and the location of the player, and timing is all-important. Only the most patient will be capable of playing head tennis before making a decisive cross, hammered goalwards with a stunning Shearer volley...

But then, the practice required for heading pales into insignificance when it comes to shooting – it's nigh on impossible to get the ball on target thanks to a ridiculous aiming system. This moves in accordance with D-pad movement; no D-pad contact leaves it at the centre of the goal. Trouble is, it's not the position of the target when the shoot button is pressed that dictates the trajectory of the shot, but the precise moment the on-screen player kicks the ball. Simple enough to describe but just give it a try in the game. As far as we can see there are two major



ROW X AND HOW TO FIND IT

Three Lions eschews traditional shot-targeting mechanisms in favour of a more complex system. By moving the bullseye with the D-pad, players aim their kicks accordingly. Trouble is, there are other concerns, such as the shooting ability of the team member under control, the positioning of that player and so on. Hoofing the ball into the top of the stand is a cross newcomers have to bear for a while.



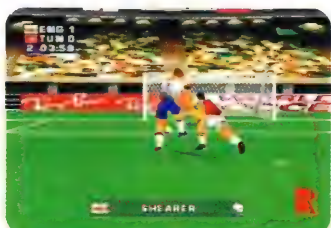
Here we see the ball coming back off the post, its accuracy due to Suker's excellent shooting ability.



Djorkaeff is favourite to score here. The trick to scoring from close range is to keep your target low.



An ambitious attempt from range. [Yes, Hassler's shot was successful. Right in the top corner.]



You can review well-taken shots with an action replay. This Shearer goal was particularly sweet.

YOU CAN ALTER THE INTENDED RECIPIENT OF ANY KICK BY CYCLING THROUGH TARGETS WITH THE TRIANGLE BUTTON.



[1] Even Ronaldo would find it nigh on impossible to score in this bloody game. **[2]** Go on lad, just smack it. Oh, we forgot about the bull's eye system.



FACE VALUE

Developer Z-Axis has given digitised faces to each England player and a number of other stars. These are only really recognisable at close range, but it's a welcome touch that adds credibility. After all, who wants to score a goal as Peter Smith or Bob Williams? Certain players even have trademark animations, such as Shearer punching the air, or the wild cry of "Batigoal!" when Batistuta finds the back of the net.



My, Mr Sheringham, what long arms you have. And might I congratulate you on your goal?



Leicester fans will recognise this face. It can only be Kasey Keller. Come on, give the man a hand...



This man is "The White Feather" to Juve supporters - and "that money-grabbing git" to Boro fans.



Ince! The Guv'nor! Fair chills your blood to see him in action...



[1] Why oh why oh why oh why??? Batty!!! [2] Well someone's got a bloody bad sense of humour. [3] It might look like he's going to score but the 'keepers in *Three Lions* can defy the laws of physics if it means stopping a goal. [4] In their pursuit of realism Z-Axis have included tonnes of celebrations.

No matter how many shots you ping into the top corners the keeper just leaps into the air and plucks it out of harms way.

Every single time. Bastard.

Of course, goalkeepers are rarely required to defend their line on their own. Defensive play is another area in which you will initially struggle. Blocking shots, intercepting passes and making desperate sliding tackles in the penalty area are essential skills that would-be winners must learn. As always, perseverance is the key to success.

After a hefty playtest it's quite clear *Three Lions* is more than a few goals short of perfection. For starters, it's not the most attractive of PlayStation releases - just compare this with the likes of *ISS Pro 98* and *World Cup 98*. Also, why do its players run so unconvincingly? The visuals are lacking and they're actually difficult to focus on from a distance. If your sofa's more than a few feet away from the telly, you'll want to move it closer during play.



► problems attached to this system. The first of these is taking your eye off the player to line up the perfect shot. This sounds good enough in practice but it normally gives the defender just enough time to nick the ball off your foot and start yet another counter attack. And then, even if you're lucky enough to get a shot in don't get too excited as you'll have one hell of a job trying to beat the keeper. This isn't because we're duff gamers you understand but because the game is so bloody hard.

VIEW TO A KILLING

No self-respecting football game would be seen in public without at least a handful of alternative play views, and *Three Lions* is no exception. It boasts five views in all, so here's a brief comment on each...



Yes, the Closecam is, indeed, a close-up view.



The Sidecam's a fixed view, so tricky for shots.



The Targetcam turns to give a view of the goal.



The Goalcam's our particular favourite.



Finally, the TVCam can be pretty useful, too.

Three Lions

TIP-TOP TACTICS

It's standard for PlayStation football games to offer a degree of tactical control, but *Three Lions* goes one step further. Rather than cycling through a list of generic formations, you can select team members and place them on a grid. Alterations are genuinely noticeable during matches.

So if, for example, you're playing against Argentina, you'll notice that their formation doesn't include wide men. A wise decision at this point

would be to ensure that you have wingers in position to capitalise on this. A quick press of the "Start" button, a visit to the tactics screen... and McManaman and Le Saux can put in as many crosses as they like.

"On the fly" tactics enable players to select the attacking bias of their side. From counter- to all-out attack, tapping R2 leads to an instant change. One day, all footie tactics will be this effective and user-friendly.



The default England formation isn't bad, but Le Saux and Beckham don't get enough crosses in...



You can view each player's individual stats. We think Z-Axis was a little harsh on poor Gazza.



Player changes can be made with ease. Better take Southgate off too, just in case of penalties.



[1] You can almost hear his manager screaming for him to "SMACK IT!" [2] With time you'll be able to head the ball directly into the goalie's arms. [3] Another lovely action shot. [4] Insert gag about players taking the p**s. [5] The old battle between these two always manages to rear its ugly head. Even Cole could score from here.



Looking at the AI you feel there's a decent game in there somewhere but they've just not taken the take to dig it out. If it's so State of the Art why do opposition players move with the ball in packs of two or three, or make diagonal runs to the flank, remaining infuriatingly just out of tackling distance for absolutely no reason whatsoever? There are instances when team members not under player control should assist by moving closer, yet inexplicably

don't, and more times when the console's choice of man is bizarre, to say the least.

There are many reasons why this isn't a particularly enjoyable game, but a moment's thought reveals the reason – it's because you, the player, are performing badly. Consider the difference between England's performance against Holland at Euro '96 and, say, their dire showing against Romania in the World Cup. *Three Lions* offers absolutely nothing to help the new-comer to the game.

Three Lions is no simple kickaround. It is, in short, a game for the PlayStation-owning football fan with more time than sense. It enables you to participate in amazingly complex matches yet, if you lack joypad skills or soccer knowledge, it's unlikely you'll get to appreciate that fact. ►

TACKLE *THREE LIONS* AS THOUGH IT'S ANOTHER *FIFA* AND YOU'LL FAIL AGAINST ALL BUT THE MOST USELESS OPPONENTS



(1) More chucking the ball about in the middle of the park. **(2)** Now this is a rare sight. Oh hang on, it's the computer player. **(3)** Surely Sheringham must score from there.



► You can score stunning goals, but doing so takes a great deal of skill – this is not for faint-hearted or fair-weather football supporters.

Three Lions is so different, so frustrating. Is this a championship contender? Well, it could have been but its more like mid-table mediocrity.

James Price



CHEEKY GETS

When it comes to football games on the PlayStation the licence is king. Just look at the early FIFA games – a complete load of tush but still they sold by the bucket-load whereas the superior *Actua* series, sans license, was left to pick up the crumbs. Take 2 decided to go for the England team and leave the proper World Cup licence to the big boys.



Total Football COMMENT

This is not a bad attempt for an American dude. There's no commentary but I think that's a welcome change, it has been replaced by some nice footballing lingo. Though the game makes for good play the thing that let this game down and lost it valuable points is the shooting, that target thing, what is it doing. Get rid of the target and make the tackling a bit better. **TF**

WHAT A MOVER

Although the graphics look ropey throughout there are moments when you're quietly impressed. The first, and most satisfying of these are the motion-captured lunges at opponents. When the game is getting frustrating, and we all know it does, it can be so gratifying to leap at the forward's legs and bring him crashing to earth in a heap. Another moment plucked from the halls of greatness are the truly incredible, Seaman-like saves from the

goalies as they leap the full length of the goal to stop your near-certain shot. You can't help but be impressed as they perform feats old Shilts would have found tough. It's just a shame they are so damned hard to beat. Your best bet has to be to aim right down the middle of the keeper. Fire away here and you should be able to sneak it right through his legs. Pretty stupid really – he can save incredible shots but he's up for an easy nutmeg.



The goalkeepers are far too hard and it often makes the game seem like a waste of time.



Acrobatic kicks in the area are a good way to score so long as you don't kick any other player.



Headers are a very useful way of getting the ball to the others without the chance of losing it.



Ince! The Guv'ner! Fair chills your blood to see him in action... Reckon he could be booked here.

IS THIS A CHAMPIONSHIP CONTENDER? WELL, IT COULD HAVE BEEN BUT IT'S MORE LIKE MID-TABLE MEDIOCRITY.



(1) Let's hope Sheringham can do better in digital form than he did in the World Cup. **(2)** The stadium designs aren't too bad but we wouldn't want to be in this one without a roof – just look at the clouds.



VERDICT

- GRAPHICS: 6
- GAMEPLAY: 6
- LIFESPAN: 5

TICKETS

- Presentation: 6
- Gameplay: 3
- Controls: 8

Three Lions could have been brilliant featuring some innovative ideas and interesting presentation things. It's just a shame it plays so badly.

5
out of 10

FREE WITH THE NEW ISSUE OF...



6 GIANT MOVIE POSTERS!



ON SALE NOW!



[1] This is what you get - the representation of a match in progress. Exciting, eh? [2] The main menu. Dripping with fun potential. [3] Financial graphs help you chart your progress, but there's not really that much to watch. [4] Set up pre-season friendlies with the best in the world. Even if you're playing Walsall.



Premier Manager '98

Reconcile the **sexiest** games console ever with **boring football statstos**? Sounds like a difficult job to us.

The football management game has become the PlayStation's holy grail. Sought by a hardy bunch of slightly odd men, this elusive and dangerous prize always seems to lie just over the horizon.

Until now.

Finally, one of the most famous footie-mannie sims is making its debut on the PlayStation and, if the rumours were true, it even outperformed *Tomb Raider 2*'s record-setting performance in pre-orders at the local games emporium. **It's Premier Manager '98, and it speaks for itself. There's been an incarnation of Premier Manager for nearly as long as there have been computer games.** Whether on Amiga, ST or PC, *Premier Manager* has been a consistently highly regarded gaming experience, well-received by critics and punters alike. Alongside the *Championship Manager* series, it's become the benchmark by which other footie-mannie sims are judged.

So, because this game is part of such a strong and worthy tradition, the new PlayStation version is bound to be an unblemished success, right?

Wrong.

Premier Manager '98 may be based on the *Premier Manager* series, but it's a very different game to the others that have carried the title in the past. This



[1] Stats seem to have become an essential part of the football sim, but here they're more of an optional extra. [2] The highlights. You just missed a cracking goal. [3] Keep track of the penalty points your men accrue for being such filthy animals.

THERE'S BEEN AN INCARNATION
OF PREMIER MANAGER FOR
NEARLY AS LONG AS THERE HAVE
BEEN COMPUTER GAMES.



■ PUBLISHER: Gremlin Interactive ■ DEVELOPER: DMA Design
 ■ RELEASE DATE: Out now ■ AGE RESTRICTIONS: None
 ■ PRICE: £44.99 ■ STYLE: Management sim



[1] There are options galore to help you tailor the game to your needs. [2] Allocate sufficient resources and you can start your players on training. [3] Top scorers. Phil's a midfielder as well. [4] The most dangerous team in the land? Not any more. [5] We're doing pretty well so far. Only another 83 minutes to hold on for.

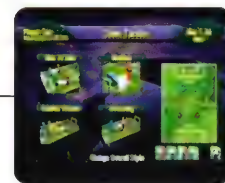


PlayStation version appears to have been dumbed down for its new audience. Which means fewer stats for the players and fewer tactical options for your team. Financial control of the club is limited too. What this adds up to is a game that die-hard football-management fans are going to find rather lightweight.

It's to be hoped that this new-found simplicity will find the game a whole new audience - it's certainly true that, in the past, footie-mannie sims have tended to be the preserve of pebble-spectacled, stat-obsessed trainspotter types. But it's difficult to imagine *PM '98*

attracting the same audience. Especially when you consider its flaws.

As we've mentioned before, *PM '98* has limited tactical options. You can choose between three options in four different areas. Your defence can be man-to-man or zonal, or you can employ a sweeper. You can tackle light, medium or heavy. You can opt for a long ball, passing or counter-attack style of play. And you can select whether to play defensive, orthodox or attacking football. In addition, you can choose any of eight different formations. It's a fairly ►



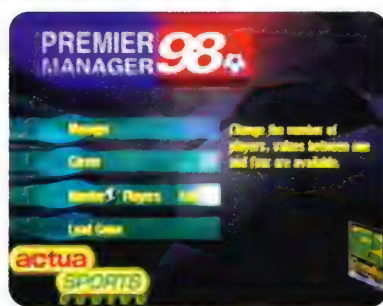
WHAT'S A FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT SIMULATION?

Premier Manager '98 enables you to take managerial control of any club from the four English professional leagues. You're responsible for team selection, tactics, training and limited financial direction (setting the ticket price and allocating funds to various areas of a club's operation), and for buying and selling players. Your short-term objective is to win games, leading to promotion or league championships, the FA Cup and, at the very highest level, European competition.

You can choose either to stick with your favourite club or to have a career in management. The latter starts you with a lowly third-division side then enables you to choose to manage other

clubs, depending on your success. Do really well managing Leyton Orient and a club such as Bristol Rovers might ask you to take over there; do well enough at Bristol and Notts Forest might come knocking on your door; and so on.

The simulation operates on a week-by-week basis, pausing to enable you to make managerial decisions and to watch matches (in turn, if you're playing with more than one player). Its playing time is potentially infinite because it never stops. New players are created each season and - as in real life - more experienced players get old and retire. Play it long enough and there won't be a single familiar name left in any of the teams.



This slightly less than inviting screen encourages you to enter the mysterious world of football management.

INJURIES

These only occur a tenth as often as they do in real-life so there's little chance of you ever having the excuse of injuries ruining your team. When you are unlucky enough to have a couple of sicknotes this screen tells you the problem and how long it will take to recover.



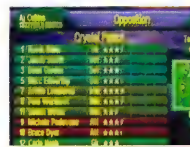
CONTRACTS

This shows your teams' contracts - this first screen showing you who's transfer listed, how much your players are earning and when their contracts expire. If you want more click on a player name to offer new contracts, list them for transfer or take them off the transfer list.



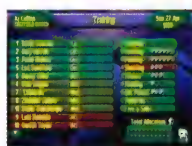
OPPOSITION

If you want to tailor your team to suit each opponent here's the place to check out their strengths and weaknesses. As you can't change tactics half way through a game it's a good idea to suss out the opposition right from the off.



TRAINING

It's all rather simple really. You've got 20 points (cunningly disguised, in this instance, as footballs) to spread about various skills from heading and shooting, penalties and free kicks. Again this is all about balancing the team out and creating a good working unit.



PENALTY POINTS

This screen gives you the chance to look at your players and work out their temperaments. It might not sound like a lot but you'll be really in the mire if you get a player sent off - imagine this happening in the middle of a real, live, World Cup match, for example.



SQUAD FORMATION

There aren't a lot of options so you have to make sure you pick the right one. For instance, if your players are getting tired at the end of the season you might want to change their tackling strength from hard to medium otherwise you're risking injuries.



STATISTICS

Unlike its PC counterpart the PlayStation version only has a few of the most important stats you will need during a game such as stamina, pace and control. The annoying thing about the stats page is the lack of info for any foreign players you might want to buy.



SQUAD

This is the most important section of the game, if you don't know your way around this section then you can forget any plans for success. Thanks to a huge pre-season you get plenty of time to get the best squad available. Once you've chosen your warriors you should start off with the training - get this right and things will get much easier. The squad formation is the next best place to start. It's here where you dictate exactly how you want your team to play - should you play dirty, long ball tactics or casual passing game...? It's your choice.

MAIN MENU



OPTIONS



Unfortunately there's no way to turn the really annoying music off that insists in playing through out the game. All you can do is turn it down.

PLAYING A GAME



If anything of interest occurs, for instance a player agrees to sign, then the PlayStation will let you know before the match starts. Aren't Sheff Utd looking tasty?

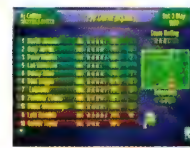
WATCH HIGHLIGHTS

If the team selected by the PlayStation coincides with the one you'd pick you can go to the highlights screen and watch the action.



PRE-GAME SQUAD

When the day clicks onto a match day the screen shows both teams and you're given three options.



Premier Manager '98

MEMORY CARD



Before you start playing *Premier Manager '98* make sure you have a completely empty memory card or you'll be right up the creek when it comes to saving your games. And another thing - it takes absolutely ages to write a saved file to the memory card.

BIDDING

Once you've found the player you want it's a simple job of getting the bid right to get hold of the player. Now obviously this differs if you want to buy Mark Beard from Sheffield United you don't have to offer the earth but if you want to get hold of the services of one Luis Ronaldo it's really going to cost you - we managed to sign him for a cool £23 million while paying him £35000 a week. Try chucking in a free car and house or goal bonus to clinch the deal.

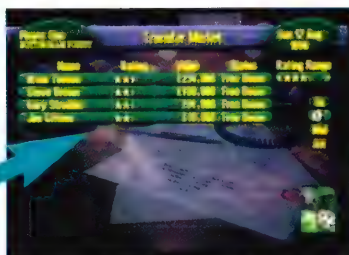


SCOUTING

When you eventually win promotion to the big league things will become a lot tougher so when you really need to strengthen your team it's worth investing a lot of money. But before you do this you're better off sending one of your four scouts on a mission to watch your target. Once they've seen the guy in action they'll report back giving you a some welcome information about the dodgy Italian you're about to spend your hard-earned cash on.



TRANSFER



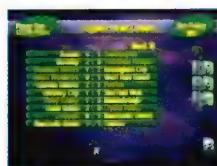
On this screen your first option is to check out the available players and see if there are any that fit your needs. If not you can still access all teams and their players.

TEAMS

Whatever the PlayStation may tell you, every player is up for sale if you offer the right price. In fact, we even captured the signature of a certain Alan Shearer from Newcastle - a snip at £22 million. All the teams from the league are present along with a select few European clubs. Just scroll through the teams until you come to the one you're looking for then try and sign their top man.



RESULTS



TEAM OF THE WEEK



DAILY NEWS



Since each of these is pretty self explanatory there's little point going into each of them in vast details - just make sure you look at these pages often as it's the best way to find out how all the other teams and players are going on. Pay attention to those lower league players who constantly appear in the team of the week as they can often be bought for a pittance.

FINANCES



TOP SCORES



FIXTURES



CHANGE SQUAD AND FORMATION

The game is programmed to choose the best side possible. Unfortunately, this is decided on who is the fittest so you could have an exceptionally fit donkey forcing Baggio out of the team. If this happens shift around the team and formation. Just remember to change formation first as changing it afterwards re-selects the best team. Once you've selected your team the game starts and you get the game stats screen. There's another chance to change tactics if you have sorted them already.

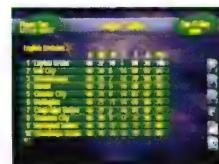


GO TO GAME

This takes you straight to the in-game screen where you can watch the game via the statistics screen. It might not be the most exciting screen but it does give you the chance to alter your team at any point during the game. If your team changes due to injury or a sending off the change shifts to the change squad screen giving you a chance to repair any damage with a quick substitution or a new tactical approach.



LEAGUE



MATCH OF THE DAY

Premier Manager '98 doesn't have the best graphics of any PlayStation game ever. During a match, two left- and right-sliding horizontal bars indicate possession and territory. And that's it.

Of course, the game also has a highlights engine. Based on *Actua Soccer 2*, this shows you the on-pitch events in glorious 3D. Unfortunately, great as it is, it operates rather

like *Match of the Day*; you only get edited highlights; you already know the score; and, by the time you get to see it, you're too late to do anything about it. Still, it looks nice.



This is how the game looks while you're actually playing it...



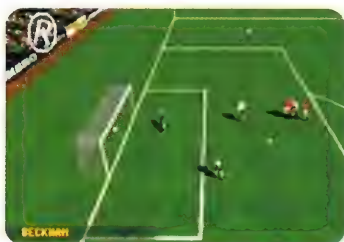
...and this is the rather more impressive highlights section.



The line showing the ball's path is great. It tells you the speed too.



The buttons on the right enable you to skip highlights, if you wish.



You get several replays of goals - each from a different angle.



It's almost as though you're there on the pitch with them, isn't it?



The highlights are very entertaining to watch, sure enough...



...but they don't really help you to judge your players' performances.

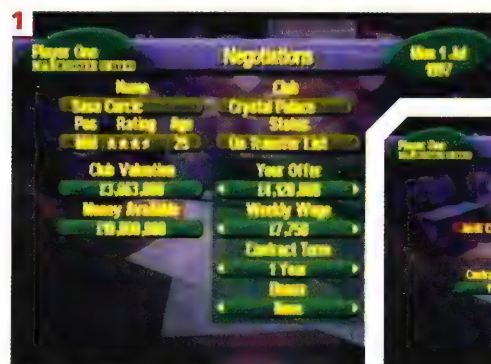
THERE'S NO CHANCE OF TELLING YOUR LADS TO HOOOF THE BALL UPFIELD IN THE LAST TEN MINUTES OF A GAME.

► straightforward, reasonable approach, except in two crucial areas. First, you can only select your tactical options at the start of a match, so there's no chance of telling your lads to hoof the ball upfield in the last ten minutes of a game to get a late equaliser; you're stuck with what you chose a full 90 minutes ago. Second, there are some completely unbelievable combinations of playing style - a 3-3-4 attacking counter-attack, for example.

But, minor niggles aside, PM '98's biggest problem is that it's a bit too easy - particularly as it automatically selects your best side for each match. After dabbling in the transfer market and building a pretty strong squad, we tried an experiment. We gave Leyton Orient, in their second year under our control, an orthodox, 4-4-2, long-ball set-up, then let the game choose our team for each match. We won the league with 106 points from 46 games.

PM '98 is quite good fun. It has the current teams and players, and it's a pleasant way to pass a few hours. But that owes more to the game-buying public's enduring fascination with footie than it does to the quality of PM '98. We have to hope that the PlayStation can play host to a better simulation than this.

Steve Faragher



(1,2) The transfer market: much enlivened by the Bosman ruling. Loads of great players are available for free. You have to be patient with the offers process, however; it can be a week or so before you hear how your bid has fared. (3) Every seven days, your newspaper votes for its team of the week. This can be a handy way to spot good players to buy.



Total Football COMMENT

Not a bad game but it's a bit simple isn't? We would have liked some more financial options, a bit more training and the on-the-day choices could have been better. And why on earth can't you alter your team and watch the highlights for the same match? That said, it's a lot of fun and the most enjoyable football manager sim about. Shame it's so bloody easy.

TF

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:
■ GAMEPLAY:
■ LIFESPAN:

HIGHLIGHTS

■ Graphics: 6
■ Gameplay: 6
■ Lifespan: 9

A missed opportunity. The PlayStation is still waiting for a great football management sim. In the meantime, this will fill a yawning gap.

7

out of 10

Official UK PlayStation Football Special

He's tanned, he's suave, a very nice man and he's got a head full of footballer's names. We travelled to the ends of the Earth to get to grips with über-commentator Barry Davies.



Barry The Lamb

Any football commentator who covers figure skating and badminton, and is STILL respected within The Beautiful Game, must be some bloke. Or a hell of a commentator. Barry Davies, as it happens, is both. After leaving the army and joining BBC Radio in 1963, Davies covered the World Cup for ITV in 1966. Since 1969, he's been one of the stalwarts of BBC Sport.

Though he only has one more year of his BBC contract to run – "I'd be stupid not to listen to Sky if they offered me anything" – he probably won't be out of work for long. At the time of the interview he'd just finished working for Gremlin doing the commentary voice-overs for top new computer game *Premier Manager*.

Do comparisons with Motty annoy you?

'Annoy' is too strong a word. We're different people. I've got as good a portfolio as it's possible to have. I go to every major Olympics, summer and winter, and all the major games. All right, I've only done one World Cup Final and two FA Cup Finals. If people want to make comparisons, that's their problem. I can't deny I'm disappointed that I haven't done more major football matches. But then I don't make the decisions.

Is there anything you don't like about John?

I'm bugged by his sheepskin jacket, because I had one years before. I was known as the guy with the sheepskin, and it changed. I got rid of mine, then Motty became the guy with the sheepskin. He wore them when they started going out of fashion. I gave mine to Oxfam.

You always seem to be covering dodgy women's sports. Has that hindered your football commentary progression?

A lot of people would say that. I think I'm a better football commentator because I do other sports. I have a wider perspective, as I'm dealing with different situations. In football people can be blinkered and think it's the only thing that's happening.

Motty says "curiously enough", are you aware of not having a catchphrase? Yes, I'd be concerned if I did. It would irritate me – but I get irritated by cadence of voice. Sometimes people say to me: "You didn't get very excited about that goal," and I say: "It wasn't a very exciting goal." The art of commentary is to react to what you're seeing, whether it's the Lord Mayor's Show or a football match. There are only so many ways of saying: "And he's coming in at the far post."

The foreigners must be a nightmare for you.

Curiously enough, they're not, because I don't get worked up about it. I hope I'm going to get a chance to talk to a new player to make sure he tells me how his name is pronounced.

You always say Solskjaer a bit funny.

That's the correct pronunciation – I got that from talking to some Norwegian commentators. And I've since checked twice and both times it's been proved right. Now I've got into the habit of doing it.

Why does no-one else say Sol-shy-rah, then?

I don't know.

Surely they're not doing their job properly?

Aw, come on! You're not going to get me to say that. Maybe my ear hears it differently from my colleagues. Or I'm being too precise – but having heard and had that sound in my head, I'd be very upset if he told me I was wrong.

What about Kvarme? Don't tell me you're meant to say Korma...

It's something like Kwoy-mah. The first time I do Liverpool, I hope to meet Scandinavian commentators and ask again. They've already told me it's that, though. I haven't thought about any of the other foreigners yet. I'm just glad Barnsley signed Eric Tinkler.

How do you see the future of football on TV?

I'm concerned. Thank God *Match Of The Day* will survive a bit longer. The chairmen of top clubs see the next contract as something they have total control over. I'm not convinced there are enough clubs with sufficient numbers of supporters who'll pay the money for pay-per-view to make it worthwhile for the whole of the Premiership.

Who did you support as a kid?

I've never answered that, because bias is in the ear of the listener.

What makes the perfect commentator?

There's no such thing. One man's perfect commentator is another man's irritation. I think commentary and, dare I say it, life itself, is about looking in the mirror and being true to yourself. I was told by the Head Of Sport when I came to the BBC to look at David Coleman and copy what he does. And I said: "I will certainly look at David, but if you want another David Coleman you've come to the wrong guy. Because for good or ill, I want be the first me." That's the way I approached it.

World League Soccer

Take away the glitter, the famous intro song, the licence, the chunky polygonal players and what have you got? A terrific little football game, actually...



(1) Okay cleverclogs. Who the hell are Breda? (2) A looping header into the corner. (3) The replay mode comes in really handy for watching top tackles. (4) Make your own player. (5) The familiar Arsenal back four begin to take shape.



There are two distinct types of football game. There's the stylish, spectacular entrants, lacking substance and genuine footballness, but impressing with their presentation and pizzazz and, eventually, catching those of us for whom football is a hobby, not a passion. The FIFA games have always been a little like this and this issue's *Three Lions* (page 66) is a perfect case in point.

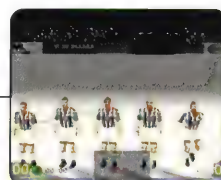
Then there's you have the footballer's football games. We're talking of a management set-up of *Premier Manager* proportions. We're talking on-field proceedings where a deft flick is as



important as a pass and where a defence-splitting through ball is as beautiful as a volley from the edge of the box. *JSS Pro* and *Actua Soccer* have always occupied this half of the footballing community and, now, to a lesser extent, *World League Soccer* has joined them.

It's a tough old gig trying to beat the aforementioned classics, but WLS works hard. It encourages a passing game, having your opposition leap in, feet-first, whenever you start to run with the ball; and the passing option is good. The ground surfaces react differently but the pass is crisp and accurate, picking out players in front of you intelligently, ensuring they have enough space to turn and continue the attack.

Indeed, the controls are easily the strongest part of the game. They're so well thought out and easily obtainable that the actual matches rapidly become battles of skill, rather than luck. There's everything that makes football games great: little one-two's, chips, through balls, first-time passes and even the slide-tackle-and-kick-the-ball-away



(1) As you'd expect from such a detailed game there are lots and lots of special moves. Here's the overhead kick for your perusal - not easy to do but worth it. (2) Not the most action-packed shot ever - give it a second and the blue guy will miss.





■ PUBLISHER:	Eidos	■ DEVELOPER:	Silicon Dreams
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ AGE RESTRICTION:	None
■ PRICE:	£39.99	■ STYLE:	Arcade



[1] Unlike other big footie games, the replay is available at any point in the game. **[2]** Lazio vs Washington. Can you imagine the score? **[3,4]** The game has all views you'd expect. Just one thing though. Aren't the referees supposed to be neutral? This one's about to smack the ball into the net.



[1] Don't let the huge tumbling letters bother you. **[2]** With conditions like this the real game would never take place. **[3]** All the stadiums feature real-life advertising hoarding for that added touch of reality.

THERE'S EVERYTHING THAT MAKES FOOTIE GAMES GREAT: ONE-TWOS, CHIPS, THROUGH BALLS, FIRST-TIME PASSES...

move demonstrated by Premiership defenders, week-in, week-out. Equally, when the ball's in the air, there's a plethora of extras: scissor kicks, stooping headers, half-volleys. Everything that, once caught right, sends you careering round the lounge, arms aloft, extolling the virtues of the Beautiful Game at extremely high volumes.

But, you have to work for your rewards in WLS – and work quite hard, at that. Unlike *Three Lions*, WLS doesn't allow you instant comfort. You can't produce anything close

to a scissor kick on your first play. The game's not tailored that way. Instead, you have to show a bit of persistence, becoming familiar with the controls *and* the way the game flows. You have to start with the basics and move up, chipping, passing and running, working the ball about. But, surprisingly, this makes for a better game. It's more realistic – and more satisfying – when you counter attack, score and defend heroically that 1-0 lead. ▶



[1] Like every good football game, all weather conditions are included. And for once the snow does change the goal. **[2,3]** You use the same bendy kick system for free kicks, throw-in's and goal kicks. Very easy and very practical.



► Clearly, this isn't pick-up-and-play material, but, where *WLS* lacks the dazzle of a *FIFA*, it parades a genuine and likeable realism. It's a hard game – a *really* hard game against the top teams – but, as your footballing armour becomes better, you'll revel in the glory of a tight 2-1 away win. It's good fun playing *real* football for a change, instead of seeing who can curl one in from that diagonal run into the box, in order to square things at 5-5.

WLS isn't perfect. It's niggly in places. Like the way you can't move from side to side when you're sprinting. Presumably this is to discourage lots of dribbling, but it would have been nice to have the choice. Also, defenders – regardless of origin are irritating in that they seem a little too good at sliding in and winning the ball and soon you daren't chance taking it any further than the 20 yard mark.

But, like Silicon Dreams' own *Olympic Soccer*, *WLS* plays well enough – very often astoundingly well – to overcome these problems and, as a bonus, it has the best commentary of any football game outside of *Actua Soccer*

2. Peter Brackley and Ray Wilkins might not be Davies and Brooking but their comments are almost repeat-free.

WLS is the underdog, certainly, and it's neither flashy or shouldered with a licence. But, it has more than enough packed into it to appease football gamers who seek something with more substance and challenge. And that's got to be recommendation enough to give it a go.

Tim Weaver



Total Football COMMENT

Commentary from Wilkins and Bracknell, there is as much excitement in those two as there is in a glass of tap water. The short pass button doubles up as a long pass without warning. You can launch yourself 10 yards into certain tackles and you play at a pace that even your granny could cope with.

TF

[1] Goal kicks are dead easy to direct – just move the pointer to the player you want and let the ball fly. [2] "Don't be cheeky goalie or I'll knock you into the net." [3] "Told you." The lesson is not to mess about here – just clear it.

THE NAME GAME

With so many games trying to get hold of coveted licences there were always going to be a few games which lose out. *World League Soccer* is one such game. Having been told how many millions it would cost to get hold of the Premier League licence Eidos decided to go it alone. Because of this you have to put up with the likes of Alan Shears, Faustino Aprayer and Shaka Hilltop instead of the proper names – all very annoying unless you get hold of the cheat to switch them to the real ones. And do you know what? We're going to tell you. At the main menu go to the Options screen then scroll down to the Player Editor screen and select the English league. Now select any team, then any player and change their name to 'TEAM TWO'. When you press X a 'Default 2' option should appear. Select this and the proper names will appear. Now save your options and go back to the main menu. You will now have all the proper names for the English teams.†



This must be the first cheat we've seen with its own logo.



It's very simple to do, just follow the instructions above.



VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS: 7
■ GAMEPLAY: 8
■ LIFESPAN: 8

TECHNOLOGY

■ Realism: 8
■ Shooting: 7
■ Passing: 7

A tireless worker and challenging throughout, *WLS* recreates football brilliantly. No flash, no licence, just the business. Great.

7
out of 10

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**ALL CREDIT
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[1,2,3] The classic view seems like it should be the best way to play but it isn't. The players run about rather unconvincingly. **[5]** Now, apparently that's West Ham's Steve Lomas. **[5]** And that, my friends, is what we call a goal.

Kick Off World

Anco's latest iteration of its famous franchise sees *Kick Off '97* and *Player Manager* combined. Is the ageing series ready for its last

Many many over-the-moons ago, a clever young lad by the name of Dino Dini created an Amiga football game called *Kick Off*. It, and its sequel, represented generational leaps for the footie-game genre, eventually inspiring the mighty *Sensible Soccer*.

But Dino Dini's defection from the Anco fold saw *Kick*

Off lose its edge. *Kick Off 3* on the PC and Amiga was poorly received, and its management-based companion release was markedly less popular. History repeated itself with the PlayStation debuts of *Kick Off '97* and *Player Manager*, the latter giving the soccer-mad strategist a particularly soiled and tatty sheepskin coat to wear.

Anco fuses these games for *Kick Off World*, in the



[1] As in many other games, the red line effect used so effectively in *Actua 2* has been picked up for *Kick Off World*. target. **[2]** Classic mode looks very dated now. **[3]** A nice bit of celebrating – shame about the soft focus.



■ PUBLISHER: Anco ■ DEVELOPER: In-house
 ■ RELEASE DATE: Out Now ■ AGE RESTRICTION: None
 ■ PRICE: £39.99 ■ STYLE: Action/Sim combo

GUIDE TABLES

Rather obvious really. If you want to check on the top and bottom of all three leagues this is the place to be.



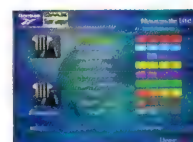
FINANCES

If you want to know whether the £10m bid for Gazza is feasible or if you just want to check how much money you owe, take a gander at this page. And make sure you balance the books every eight weeks or you're out.



EDITOR

Fans of Manchester United will be pleased to know team strips can be edited at any stage of the season so you never have to be seen in last week's kit.



SAVE GAME

Make sure you have as much space on your memory card as possible as *Kick Off World* creates massive save files.



MAIN MENU



At first navigating the system is a touch complex but you get used to it soon enough.

SQUAD

The body of the game. It's here where you decide who to play, where to play them and how you want your players to act (defensive, offensive and so on.) You can also access the transfer screen or organise a quick sale.



INFORMATION

Make sure you have as much space on your memory card as possible as *Kick Off World* creates massive save files.



FIXTURES

Very simple. This just lets you know which games are coming up so you can rest certain players to make sure they are fit for the important games.



TRANSFERS

If your team is lacking bite or your goalkeeper needs replacing working your way around the transfer screen couldn't be easier. Use the shoulder buttons to see who are available, select the player then make a bid for them. A tick or cross denotes whether your bid was successful. If a plus sign appears you have to offer more money. If the deal is completed the player is added to your ranks immediately.



TIP-TOP TACTICS

Like most football games *KOW* has quite a few options to sort out exactly how you want the players to act on the field. Unlike most games, they are far too limited leaving you with buggar all chance of changing the

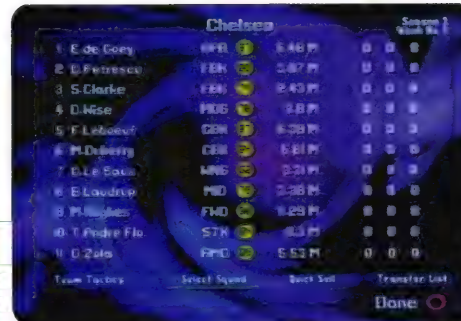
gameplay. To start with you need to decide where the focus of your game will be. We reckon you're best off with the slightly attacking options using the 5-3-2 system. This should give you ample chance to score.



If you're under the cash this option should give the best chance to survive.



The numbers in yellow circles give you the overall rating of each player. Very handy stuff.



In *Kick Off World* the price of the player is usually in direct relation to their abilities.



1 A goal! **2** The game seems to have an in-built stat book with handy facts such as this one. **3** The star tells you who you're controlling (believe us, this is a handy addition as it lets you know exactly when you win the ball).



PLAYER MANAGER'S WOEFULLY INADEQUATE "STRATEGY" BOLTED UNCOMFORTABLY TO KO '97'S GLITCH-RIDDEN AND DATED ARCADE GAMEPLAY.

peculiar hope that they'll somehow be much better together than they were on their own. But it's a strange, uneasy alliance – *Player Manager's* woefully inadequate "strategy" bolted uncomfortably to *KO '97's* glitch-ridden and dated arcade gameplay.

Kick Off World is an extremely poor cousin to its PlayStation Premier League contemporaries. It is, in short, a desperately flawed release, with almost crippling shortcomings: during match sequences, the collision detection is dismal; the goalkeepers are either shockingly good or incredibly inept; the passing and shooting systems are at best unsatisfactory; and so on. *KOW's* "management" elements are almost beyond reprieve, with ridiculously

unfriendly menu systems making even elementary team selection a chore. Even if you are prepared to persevere the limited options make sure you only stay involved for a few hours – it's just so basic. For an example, let's take a look at buying a player. Once you've looked through the pitiful list of players available and you've made your mind up who to bid for all you have to do is match the asking price and offer a stupid amount for the player's salary and the deal will be done. It leaves absolutely no room for satisfying negotiation.

And we mustn't forget *Kick Off World's* in-game commentary, which is possibly the worst the PlayStation has ever played host to. With limited key phrases spooled from CD at "trigger" points (such as tackles or shots), *KOW* sounds more like a parody than Alan Partridge ever did in *The Day Today*.

Even the option to play "classic" *Kick Off* is of little worth, because this mode is virtually unplayable (and thus

GAME STYLE

This takes the gameplay idea of *Premier Manager '98* one step further by allowing you to play the games as well as manage the team. So, should you decide you don't want to risk the computer players screwing up a vital game you can opt to play the game yourself. You can play the game in two modes: Classic or Modern. Select the former and you get a great Blimp-like view with the little players running up and down the screen like poorly animated blobs. Select the latter and



This is a great option where you can decide which style of game to play. Pick the modern.



This is the so-called modern view. The players are rendered in true 3D so you can go where you want.



This view is great for the die-hards but it does prove very tricky to play a decent game because...



the players are far too fiddly and it can take an absolute age to get control of the ball.

WITH KEY PHRASES SPOOLED FROM CD AT "TRIGGER" POINTS, *KOW* SOUNDS MORE LIKE A PARODY THAN ALAN PARTRIDGE



1 If choosing teams isn't enough, how about stadia? Move your flag around the map (1),

Kick Off World

GOD, I REMEMBER KICK OFF!

For those of you new to this videogaming lark the name *Kick Off* and Dino Dini will be absolutely meaningless yet for those of us who remember the 80's memories of one of the top football games of the Amiga years come flooding back. Before the days of *Sensible Soccer*, *Kick Off 1* and *2* were kings. Never before had the idea of minute footballer

running up and down the screen been so successfully executed. Pressure to recreate the monster success of the first two proved too much and the third outing, *Goal*, while still wonderful, was missing a vital something. From here things went a little quiet until Anco released the awful *Player Manager* early into the PlayStation's life. Two years later they were to



You can get away with ropey graphics if the gameplay is the same quality as this classic.



The original *Kick Off* was a truly magnificent experience with tonnes of gameplay.



This latest version of the *Kick Off* series gives you the chance to play either style. What a treat.



(1) Now, this looks like the overhead view but it's just a replay. **(2)** The stadiums look spot on through out the game. **(3)** A goal mouth yesterday. **(4)** For some reason Anco decided to stick animals at the bottom of the team sheet. **(5)** When the game start there is a great intro showing the starting position of all the players.



incredibly frustrating) without joystick control – as any videogame footballing veteran will attest. Within seconds of losing the ball you'll give it away and when you do try and get it back you'll spend the next minute circling around the ball as the d-pad refuses to let you turn the corner as you need to. No sir, this is not good. What we used to have here was one of the most playable games you could ever wish to play; alas, what we have now is a poor shadow of its former self. It's like watching 1990 Gazza then being forced to sit through his 1998 performances for Middlesbrough - let sleeping dog's lie.

Compared with soccer heavyweights such as *Actua Soccer*, *Three Lions* and *ISS Pro*, *Kick Off World* is eminently Third Division – and no number of players, teams or options can disguise that fact. It's a shame, this used to be such a wonderful game but there's nothing of it left in here now. Oh well, and we had high hopes for this one.

James Price



Total Football COMMENT

Good old *Kick Off* is bac. But why? In the days it was kind of fun – infuriating but fun. Just look at what games consoles have achieved in the last few years, do you think that we need a revival of this game? I don't think so! This game wouldn't even stimulate my 3-year-old nephew. If you're 1 a fanatic, good for you, it's back and it's worse than ever.

TF

Official UK
PlayStation
Football Special

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:
■ GAMEPLAY:
■ LIFESPAN:

3
3
3

TECHNICALS

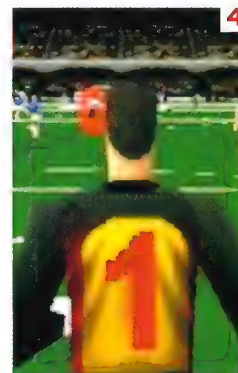
■ Graphics:
■ Gameplay:
■ Tactics:

2
3
5

A good idea – combine a management game with an arcade-based football counterpart – but *Kick Off World* fails. An early World Cup bath for Anco...

3
out of 10

[1,2] When a player takes a throw-in or a set piece the camera zooms right into them and gives you a little bit of detail about their performance. **[3]** This is one of those great looking but useless to play with viewpoints. **[4]** Go on! Kick it to the ReadyBrek fella.



Actua Soccer 2

Did Gremlin manage to **stick one past Konami** in this grey-haired classic.

Well, it was true before but does this **stand the test of time?**



[1] Get used to England playing at Old Trafford - it'll happen as soon as they start rebuilding Wembley. **[2]** Why is the defender running away from the attacker? **[3]** Only a Brazilian would have the balls to even try scoring from here.

At first we had *ISS Pro* and we all loved it. "It's the best football game on the PlayStation" we said, but that was quite a while ago, and we all know how quickly the goalposts move in the world of programing standards and they shifted again when this was leapfrogged by *ISS Pro '98*, meaning *Actua 2* lost its initial nine point score.

With the release of *Actua Soccer 2*, Gremlin decided to return to using international teams, ditching the precedent

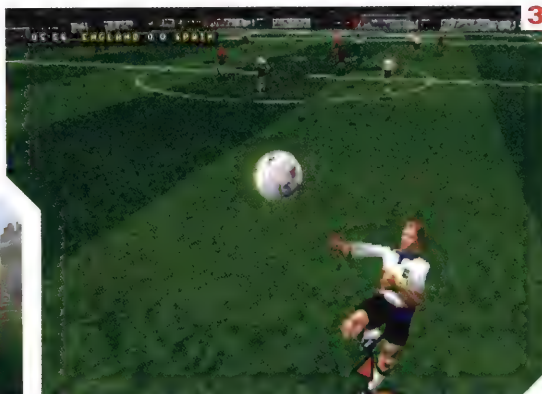
set by the Club Edition of the original title. However, it's a slightly hollow move, as far as the British football fan is concerned, for club loyalty rides every bit as high, if not higher, than national football pride. So, Premiership and perhaps First Division clubs would have been welcome.

There is a way that you can laboriously circumnavigate this problem, however, for *Actua 2* contains a team editor enabling you to create an entire squad from scratch, making decisions over kit colour, club name, the names of the players and their on-the-ball abilities. So it is indeed possible to devise all of the Premiership teams and store them on Memory Card, though sadly you can't do the First Division as well - you're limited to 24 of your own teams. Although the prospect of creating 24 squads is in itself as unappealing as to warrant hand-rubbing from pedantic trainspotters only.

GREMLIN DECIDED TO RETURN
TO USING INTERNATIONAL
TEAMS, DITCHING THE PRECEDENT
SET BY THE CLUB EDITION



PUBLISHER:	Gremlin Interactive	DEVELOPER:	In-house
RELEASE DATE:	Out now	AGE RESTRICTION:	None
PRICE:	£44.99	STYLE:	Arcade



1 That'll be Huddersfield's glorious stadium then. **2** Gremlin spent a lot of time working on the weather effects to improve the game **3** Look closely, this is the only time you'll see Shearer unmarked. **4** So where's the old grey-haired, money grabbing git now then?



As is common with football games there are four different styles of competition into which you can enter. To improve your skills, there's a practice mode where you don't have an opposition to get under your feet, so you're left alone to hammer away at goal unhindered. There's also the obligatory friendly, for quick fire games against mates; a league mode with four leagues to battle through; and a cup mode, where you define which of the 64 International teams battle it out for supremacy. So far, so relatively ordinary.

But then 'ordinary' is not a word you can use when attempting to describe the game in action. Long before you tackle the team editor, and before you take on a full cup tournament, you'll be leaping straight in for a friendly. England against Argentina, probably. And what immediately strikes you about *Actua Soccer 2* is the pace of the game; it flies, quite frankly. This turn of speed makes the game play more realistically than either *ISS Pro* or the previous *Actua*, although it must be said that you can scream along from goalmouth to goalmouth at such a tremendous pace that the pitch often seems too short and proportionally out of touch with reality.

Despite this added speed, though, none of the refinements of the original incarnation have been lost. You can still play some beautifully deft touches, and there are loads of 'special moves' to be employed if you manage to get your player in the right place at the right time. The 'Actua Ball Dance' which had you running around the ball repeatedly trying to pick it up in the first game, is no

THE SECOND *ACTUA* HOWEVER, CERTAINLY GIVES THOSE PLUCKY CANADIANS A GOOD RUN FOR THEIR MONEY.

longer such a hindrance (though it's not been entirely eradicated), and so the flow of the game is far smoother.

One of the big changes over the previous incarnation is the quality of the presentation. While the original was good enough in its own way, it never quite reached the standards set by EA's *FIFA* series. The second *Actua*, however, certainly gives those plucky Canadians a good run for their money. All the way through the game the attention to detail is fantastic. In a good light the players look like the real thing, enjoy a spot of night time action and the players have real-time shadows cast by the floodlight. There's even the inclusion of that orange ball for playing in snowbound games that, in reality, would never see the players emerge from the tunnel.

But surely the most impressive bit of the game comes when you smack a ball into the back of the onion bag. Within a second the best replay in football gamedom appears in glorious widescreen effect (with the players suitably squashed) to show you the details of the goal from every angle you could ever think of.

Another lovely touch is the ability to lock onto one player. Just think how many times we've been defending in any other football games and the player suddenly switches to one well away from the danger. Not for the *Actua* player,



1 When you get used to the controls headers like this one against Germany become second nature... **2** ...as do properly timed tackles. Remember to get close to your opponent. **3** *Actua Soccer 2* is full of little touches such as the orange ball in snowy games.



SHEARER: GAME ON

Actual Soccer 2 is the videogame with Shearer's photo on the front. He claims to have been playing it while he was out injured last year, but he would, wouldn't he? The game is running on the hotel telly and I suggest to Shearer that, despite his endorsement, he doesn't have the first idea how to play the game. "No I've been playing it a lot recently," he pleads. "But I find it hard to sit down on my own, I need someone to play it with me." Shouldn't have said that, Alan. There's no backing out of this one.

Shearer is clearly the favourite, taking control of the much-fancied Brazil, while I play England. But I'm quietly confident that the four evenings I've spent mastering the game's tactical nuances are going to stand me in good stead. Shearer doesn't bother setting up his formation or tactics, so I take the chance to indulge in some Ferguson-style psychology. I drop Shearer from the side (muttering "He'll have to go") and replace him with the in-form Cole.

It's end-to-end stuff at first with both sides going close, but just before half-time, Roberto Carlos makes a lunge at Cole in the penalty area. The ref points to the spot, Wright slots the ball home and I can't resist the urge to scream in triumph, clenched fist held aloft. Shearer rallies well at the start of the second half, so on the hour I take off Cole and bring on... Shearer. "He's supposed to be quite good," I mumble. Brazil continue to batter the England goal and, with 15 minutes left, the second-best striker in the world - that's Ronaldo, obviously, controlled by Shearer - equalises with a header from a Mauro Silva corner. Celebrations continue while real-world Shearer does a perfect impression of Barry and Trev's summary.

But with time rapidly ticking down, my virtual Shearer scores the winner - a solo-run followed by a 30-yard piledriver - dashing the hopes of his real-life counterpart. "I took that well!" he says, magnanimous in defeat. "Best of three?"

Actua Soccer 2

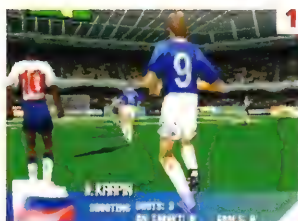


[1] So how do you think Paraguay would cope with playing in snow? **[2]** If England ditched the Green Flag sponsorship this could happen. **[3]** The replays really do look fantastic. **[4]** Everything looks brilliant in *Actua 2* - just look at the shadows. Fantastic. **[5]** It was coming for ages.



THE GAME INITIALLY SEEMS TRICKY TO MASTER, BUT STICK IT IN 'AMATEUR' MODE... AND FRUSTRATION IS KEPT AT BAY

all you have to do is keep a pre-determined button pressed and you play as the same player as long as there is danger.



[1] Okay, so he's not having a very good game is he. **[2]** Surely the Dutch kits have never looked so ugly. Just what colour is that?



Setting up memorable goals is far from easy, though this is no bad thing - it takes a while before you even get your first goal. The game initially seems tricky to master, but stick it in 'Amateur' mode (there are also Semi-Pro and Pro), and frustration is kept at bay. Stick with the game for a number of hours, and you'll find that matches against the CPU become winnable, and more enjoyable.

But it's when playing against friends that football games are at their most enjoyable, and it's here that *Actua* delights. As many as four players can compete at once, using the PlayStation's Multi-Tap, with no more than two players on either side, though it is possible to play with just two players taking on the CPU, both battling for the same team. Because the action is that much quicker than the majority of the other football sims on the PlayStation, person vs person games are that much more fun. More fun, even, than the rather more arcade-style clashes that *ISS Pro* players will be familiar with.

Actua Soccer 2 is an improvement over the previous editions, and it has a different flavour to the Japanese title. *ISS Pro* was, a fantastic football game, but *Actua Soccer 2* is football. It feels like football, it looks like football. It's the most realistic football game available in terms of pace. It just so happens that we marginally prefer *ISS Pro 98* now.

Andrew Collins

Total Football COMMENT

Actua 2 isn't brilliant, but if you're prepared to spend time getting to know it you will be pleasantly surprised. The game has appeal, it's fast and furious; and there is usually some good end to end stuff. The style is very much like *Kick Off* but with a lot more detail and playing against a pal is the best way to enjoy it. One thing that I did notice in this game is that the players seemed to be playing with a size 3 ball which isn't so good if you're wearing size 11 boots. **TF**

Official UK
PlayStation
Football Special

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:
■ GAMEPLAY:
■ LIFESPAN:

8

9

8

TESTING

8

9

8

AS2 is better than **AS**, and it's a more football-like game than *ISS Pro*. It's still a hard game to master, but stick with it and it rewards.

8

out of 10

[1] You've beaten the goalie. Not to a bloody pulp or anything - you just scored. [2] Oh, just kick it. [3] The goalie's worried. [4] Surely Bergkamp can score. [5] Scramble!



adidas Power Soccer '98

Straight into the back of the net, or own goal? What has the latest version of *adidas Power Soccer* got in store for you?



By their very nature, football games are highly stylised and invariably idealistic interpretations of a very complex sport. The basic rules are easy to grasp, yet the sheer scope of mathematical possibilities in a few seconds' worth of play and the minutiae of each player's degree of involvement are simply beyond the casual comprehension of a few PlayStation computer chips.

It's understandable, then, that certain developers go for a rather more simplistic approach when bringing their

take on the Beautiful Game into your living room. Step forward *adidas Power Soccer '98*. A far cry from *ISS Pro's* (page 52) measured build-up play, or *Three Lions'* (page 66) pre-orchestrated, one-touch trickery, a match in *APS '98* is not unlike your average, frantic schoolyard knockabout. The ball is kicked. The players chase for it at incredible speeds and it is then hoofed back to where it came from. As the ball flies from end to end there is no time to construct anything like considered or elegant attacks, leaving you with a clumsy donkey of a match.

[1] You can almost hear his manager screaming for him to "CROSS IT!" [2] Is he looking for the set piece from the corner or is he just going to sky it? This is the Welsh squad after all. [3] That's not terribly elegant is it? [4] God bless the late challenge. God bless the elbow to the face. And God bless excruciating ankle injuries. Ouch.





■ PUBLISHER:	Psygnosis	■ DEVELOPER:	In-house
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ AGE RESTRICTION:	None
■ PRICE:	£36.99	■ STYLE:	Arcade



[1] You in the blue! That's the wrong way. [2] It's only a stats table, calm down. [3] Look at him lounge - used to be a page three model before the op. [4] Come on, get on the pitch now son. [5] Everyone exits backwards in the David Lynch testimonial.



Of course I am being a little harsh and you can say that there is more to APS '98 than simply kicking the ball in a straight line. Genre prerequisites such as through balls and one-two's are available and, despite the huge pace of each match, they can be used with a certain degree of success. Essentially, however, their inclusion is of little practical worth.

Players run at such a pace that by far the most successful tactic is to leather the ball forward, before giving chase with a centre forward. Yes, you can perform artful little flicks and passes and yes, it is possible to play in what some fans might well consider a sophisticated manner rather than simple kick and rushing. However, if you go for a more direct style of play, you'll score more goals and win more matches.

It's a subjective issue, but APS '98's lack of subtlety will ensure it is of limited appeal to football purists. Its more tangible flaws, however, are of greater importance. Visually,

despite its hi-res graphics, it's no title contender, and would struggle to hold its own against the first generation of PlayStation football games. One of the most unforgivable problems is that it's packed with infuriating minor glitches and inconsistencies. Take the defenders' propensity for knocking the ball into their own net after their keeper has blocked a shot, or the woefully inadequate nature of the automatic player selection, or its awful offside logic.

Multi-player matches are more enjoyable, naturally. But why would you settle for APS when you could be playing the more refined ISS, or the gifted World Cup '98? And so on. Psygnosis, all conquering in so many gaming categories, will have to try much harder if it's to add the football genre to their portfolio of success stories....

James Price

Total Football COMMENT

You need to be an octopus and a scientist of to work out and become fluent with these controls. APS is quite slow and the players move around like Paul McGrath. If you're intending to play long passes forget it, you'll only give the ball away and I've never heard such insignificant match reports in my life. For some reason the makers of this game felt the need to add somersaults and two-footed challenges to the game. Surely leaving these out would have given space for something more appealing.

TF



[1] Arsenal looking better than the geordies, but only because they're closer. [2] Hammer it up for a goal and leave your silky skills at home. [3] It's another corner... [4] Who will break this up with a good hooper?

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	5
■ GAMEPLAY:	5
■ LIFESPAN:	8

TECHNIQUE

■ Passing:	4
■ Shooting:	4
■ Tactics:	3

A disappointing and often infuriating game, APS '98 is not the worst soccer game on the PlayStation, but it's a good few hat-tricks behind the likes of ISS.

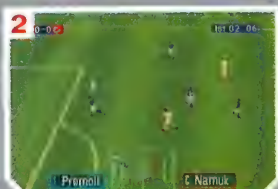
5

out of 10

Official UK
PlayStation
Football Special

Platinum

(1) The names aren't quite right but they are pretty funny. (2) The far view is the easiest to play with giving you ample room to see exactly what's going on. (3) And we you'd celebrate if you too were in the best PlayStation game, well second best.



(1) Fouling a player can lead to a yellow card and... (2) a free kick exactly where you don't need it.



ISS Pro



(1) Headers are vital to any successful challenge. (2) A free kick - you'll never score from there.

■ PLAYERS: Two
■ PUBLISHER: Konami
■ FIRST RELEASED: May 1997
■ ORIGINAL SCORE: 9/10

Despite the wealth of competition *International Superstar Soccer Pro*, remains the finest simulation of the 'beautiful game' that the PlayStation has to offer. *Actua Soccer 2* is excellent, undoubtedly, but even a brief reappraisal of the talents of *ISS Pro* proves that nothing else feels quite as good.

We'd forgotten about the slinky one-tuos you can play by tapping the lower left shoulder button. We'd forgotten about the fabulous through balls - sneaking the ball between two defenders into the path of your centre forward who, in turn, chips it neatly over the keeper. And despite the fact that virtually every soccer sim now has its own speed-up facility, giving a player an extra yard of pace, the *ISS* version remains the most effective.

Although Konami hasn't used real players in the game the artists have produced some dead ringers. If you look carefully, you can spot players such as Gascoigne, Ravanelli, Klinsmann, Roberto Baggio (by his old pony tail) and

Colombia's Carlos Valderrama - check out the huge blond afro.

To add more realism to the game the players have a variety of shots, sure, you can score with simple shots but give it a couple of hours and you soon be ping-pong in balls from all angles. A good tip to score is run along the wings then cross the ball just as you're about to go over the goal line. When the ball is just about to hit your man in the box press one of the shoot buttons to perform one of the many special moves.

While *ISS* was never the fastest of soccer games the pace is

considered. You get the chance to think about what you're doing, whether you want to play a long or short ball or attempt a mazy dribble. The animation is superb, particularly when players turn on a sixpence and head off in another direction. Even during the most frantic of goal mouth scrambles the frame rate stays right up at top whack.

A fine game, and at £20, the best value footie game around.

VERDICT 9/10



(1) He shoots, he scores, he's a dancing man in shorts. (2) Look at the smileys and see how well your fellows are.





(1) The replays can be used to watch as much silky skill as you can perform. (2) The little circular time bar lets you know exactly just how long the game has to run. (3,4) Two more exceptional replays. A lot of fun can be had watching the tackles over and over again.



adidas Power Soccer

PLAYERS: Four
PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
FIRST RELEASED: May 1996
ORIGINAL SCORE: 8/10

adidas Power Soccer was one of the first PlayStation football games – only *Actua Soccer*, *Goal Storm* and *Striker '96* preceded it – and, with the benefit of a handful of hindsight, it's somewhat of an enigma. APS introduced some never-seen-previously features into the

football game, including deliberately shocking tackles and, because of Psygnosis' tie-in with adidas, the special adidas Predator boot strike which knocked the goalkeeper into the back of the net. Another curious, though nevertheless interesting, feature is the footage showing how the Predator boot was developed, backed with some commentary and a fantastic Leftfield soundtrack.

adidas Power Soccer has both arcade and simulation options. This isn't unusual in itself, but rarely has a developer gone so wonderfully over the top in an arcade mode. If you want your player to move faster, press the correct button and he goes careering around the pitch, a trail of stars flashing behind him. It's reminiscent of the start of the old *Wonderful World of Disney* series. One thing, remember each player only has a limited amount of power so make sure you don't use it all too quickly or you'll be left behind when you try and make your tackles. To finish the package the action is backed with suitably outraged commentary by ITV's Brian 'The referee's in danger of losing control' Moore.

All this is well and good but it does make the game that little bit too simple. As soon as you learn to pull off the special shots you can pretty much guarantee a goal every time. Just imagine how frustrating a game would be when your mate

knows how to perform the moves and you don't. This is a shame as there's a nice football engine in the game but too much razzmatazz can spoil the game if it's overused. If you're careful not to let the tricks go to your head this is a decent, and more importantly, a cheap football game which is at least worth a look.

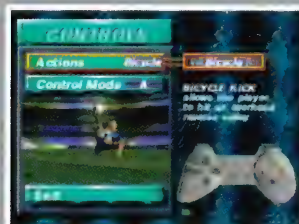
Still second to the likes of *Actua Soccer* and that's still the case. This isn't a terrible game by any means but in Manchester it would be more City than United.

VERDICT 5/10



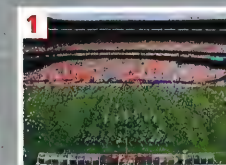
(1) You're not likely to have much luck from here but it's worth a try. (2) This is the most extreme viewpoint available – remind you of any game in particular?

(1,2) If the game is famous for anything it's got to be the tackles – they're absolute shocking.





(1) The 1994 World Cup ceremony was a classic. (2) The replay mode is very handy, showing every angle possible.



(1,2) FIFA still looks pretty good in screenshots, (3) but it all goes wrong when it starts to move.

Fifa Soccer '96

■ PLAYERS: Two
■ PUBLISHER: EA
■ FIRST RELEASED: Jan 1996
■ ORIGINAL SCORE: 7/10

Back when motion capture and good light-sourcing weren't *de rigueur* in every game Electronic Arts made a name for themselves with their superlative 16-bit soccer superstar, the *Fifa Soccer* series. Every version sold millions so there was never a doubt that EA would be hard at work on a PlayStation version as soon as they laid their dirty mitts on a PSX development kit.

In October '95 there were few PlayStation football games with only *Striker '96* and *Onside Soccer* vying for the gamer's attention. Mostly due to this lack of competition and the strength of the licence *Fifa Soccer '96* sold by the bucket-load.

Quality was low when game was released but now it doesn't stand a chance. Sure, there are all the teams you could ever wish for but the game just doesn't work anymore. Take a look at it now and you realise how far the PlayStation and football games in particular have progressed. Gone is the positive impression given by their 'Virtual Stadium' system (Wembley Stadium in any other guise) and the small but effective characters. Now, we're lumbered with only one stadium

and players that look like they've been rammed through a blender, chucked into a football shirt and thrown on the pitch.

This may seem harsh, after all, it's only twenty quid but when you can buy the likes of *ISS Pro* and, to a lesser degree, *Adidas Power Soccer* there really is no point even entertaining the idea of *Fifa '96*. If you desperately want a FIFA game check out the second hand bins where you should be able to find a cut-price Road to World Cup nestling in a bargain bin somewhere.

If you're looking for a £20 football game there really is no question... get *ISS Pro*.

VERDICT 4/10



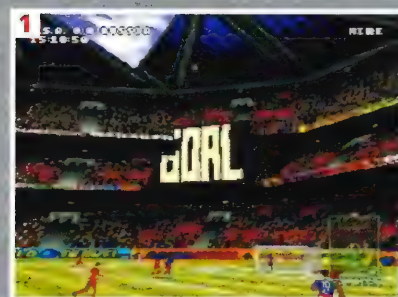
(1) Sometimes the players look like they're levitating. Weird. (2) The tension of a penalty kick. Thank god it's not Batty, (3,4) While it's not the best you'll find now, the strategy elements were pretty smart at the time. They just couldn't be changed mid-game.



(1,2,3,4,5,6) Actua has a lot of teams to play with. Look hard and you might find the coders.



Actua Soccer



(1) The screen looks good but all it ever does is let you know when there's been a goal. Still, it's a nice touch. (2) The perspective changes to keep everything in perfect view. (3) The 'Goal' sign stays on the screen for bloody ages.

PLAYERS:	Two
PUBLISHER:	Gremlin
FIRST RELEASED:	Jan 1996
ORIGINAL SCORE:	9/10

The first of Gremlin's *Actua* series of sports sims, *Actua Soccer* very quickly became the company's flagship PlayStation title, and rightly so. Even now, nearly two years after its original release, it still plays a damn fine game of football. *Actua* differs from its rivals in that, rather than plumping for an arcade style, it attempts to provide a more accurate portrayal of the game.

The result is still one of the best football sims for any machine. It's by no means the easiest game to pick up and play, and the control

system requires some really serious practice. At the start of the game you'll be able to get by with the most basic of kicks but soon enough you'll be disguising passes, dummied opponents and volleying the ball into the back of the net. (And scream your head off in a weird, red-misted dreamworld of football heaven) Once you manage to score your first goal, you'll be hooked.

AS is one of the few footie games that plays like the real thing. For the first time professional footballers, well Andy Sinton and Chris Woods, had been used to provide the fancy motions used by the artist to make the players' movement so realistic. Chuck in some sensible camera views and the game is more than playable than the usual game.

While there is the standard exhibition game *Actua Soccer* features a huge variety of game

modes to keep you playing from the start of the season to Arsenal's conquest in the European Cup.

But perhaps AS's greatest strength is the AI of the computer-controlled players. Both the rest of your team and your opposition behave in a realistic manner, allowing you to set up plays and rely on the rest of your side. Likewise beating the opposition's defence is a real challenge. In fact the only real problem with AS is that the sequel, *Actua Soccer 2* has been on sale for a few months now and is superior in almost every way (and it's just been reduced to thirty quid).

Still, at the budget, Platinum price, *Actua Soccer* remains a very tempting proposition for the gamer looking for some cheap football action.

VERDICT 7/10

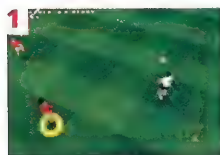
(1) Look at the advert behind the goal - 18 months late. (2) There's no avoiding the screen.



Actua was always a good game for the little details. Just look at the detail on this pitch - it's even got stripes! Brilliant!



Actua Soccer: Club Edition



[1] Actua Soccer CE keeps the same symbols below the players so things are nice and easy. **[2]** At times the kits are a little rosey -- here you can only tell it's Newcastle thanks to the stripes. **[3]** Blackburn away '96.

■ PLAYERS:	Two
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	June '97
■ PRICE	£29.99

Released a year after the first game, AS:CE was criticised as a quick cash in on the best-selling PlayStation game. A quick switch of the teams and the proper player names and Actua Soccer suddenly had a club edition.

The whole point of this game was to give the gamer chance to play as their very own team. This worked fine at the time but 18 months on and it looks rather tawdry by today's standards and at least 80 percent

of the kits are out of date.

In the end there is no reason to recommend the purchase of the Club Edition. It's more expensive than the now-Platinum original and features every out-dated kit you can think of. Get hold of Actua Soccer 2 and use the team editor option instead.

This always seemed like an excuse to print even more money. Avoid it.

VERDICT 4/10

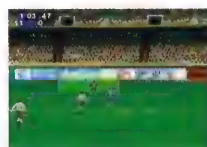


Fifa '97

■ PLAYERS:	Four
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	Xmas '96
■ PRICE	£39.99

When we originally reviewed this we gave them a little grace, they were new to the PlayStation after all, and forgave them for not making the most of the machine. But when they gave us FIFA '97 we were less forgiving -- saying there was a 'nagging suspicion remaining that EA still haven't got the really playable football game the licence demands.'

In hindsight we were far too easy on the game when we awarded it



seven. There's nothing to recommend it at all. It might be cheap but it's not as cheap as FIFA '96 (and isn't that much better). You can probably pick up Road to World Cup for the same price and it's far superior.

This is the worst FIFA games of the lot, which, if you remember them, is quite poor.

VERDICT 3/10



[1] You're going to need more than one striker to get past this lot. **[2]** It's very easy to set all your player on an attack. **[3]** The German kit. Nasty.

Fifa Road to World Cup '98



■ PLAYERS:	Four
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	Xmas '96
■ PRICE	£39.99

Before they produced the best FIFA game ever, Electronic Arts had a test run with their Road to World Cup '98. At the time this looked like an extreme case of cheekiness but EA were vindicated when PlayStation magazines the length of the country all agreed it was one of the best football games to reach the PlayStation.

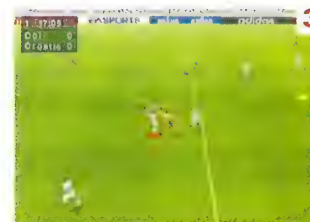
In the end the game turned out to be a marked improvement over the

previous PlayStation efforts. Instead of waiting for the player animation to run through its cycle you were able to interrupt the motion and keep the gameplay running at a decent speed.

Chuck in some tidy graphics, great computer AI and you've got the second best FIFA game. If you're short of the necessary quids and really want a bit of FIFA fun check out the bargain bins... you might find one of these cheap.

Not quite as good as World Cup '98 but it's certainly worth considering as a cheaper, fun alternative.

VERDICT 8/10



[1] Just look at this for a perfect example of lens flare. This is just one of the fancy effects the artists have used to make the game look as good as possible. **[2]** All the players are crisply drawn with smart animation. **[3]** There is a huge range of horrendous tackles to try out.

All Star Soccer



(1) Bloody stupid looking pitch. (2) Have you ever seen nets like this? (3,4) All the players have very silly haircuts. Not good.



■ PLAYERS:	Two
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	Sept '97
■ PRICE	£44.99

This is a strange one. Designed to be the first 'funny' PlayStation game it fell incredibly flat when it was released last summer. Instead of giving you a standard set of footballers to kick the ball with, the developers introduced the rather 'interesting' idea of picking and choosing the body parts of different players to suit your needs. So, if you fancy a player with Gazza's ability but don't really want his temperament just switch his head. Simple but not

really that effective.

This is a nice try at injecting something different into an already over-populated area but it doesn't quite cut the mustard. Let's face it, as soon as any genre game is released with a whole host of gimmicks we tend to give it a long hard stare. Perhaps the developers should have spent some more time working on making us enjoy the game instead of making us laugh. You can see where this was heading, it just never quite gets there.

This is quite funny, but for all the wrong reason. It's still a nice try though.

VERDICT 3/10



Olympic Soccer



A touch of long-ball action never hurts, does it? Just whack the ball up to the forwards and see if they can make anything happen - they should be able to, it's not a hard game to score.

■ PLAYERS:	Two
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	July 96
■ PRICE	£44.99

Come on, put your hands up. How many people out there can tell us who the hell are the Olympic Football champions? That's right, hardly any of you (just for the record it's Nigeria). Such was the desire to go for a licence Eidos were prepared to go for this rather obscure option. But don't let this put you off, OS is a rather decent football game, if not the most exciting.

Featuring small polygon players

dashing about the screen, *Olympic Soccer* and its later incarnation, *Soccer '97*, are probably the fastest football games on the PlayStation. And so, as the standard review adage goes: if you like fast games you'll like these. But if you do want to buy one take our advice (and you know you should) stick to *Olympic Soccer's* younger, smarter brother: *Soccer '97*.

We implore you: don't even bother with this one. Why not take a look at the sequel - Soccer '97 instead.

VERDICT 5/10

(1) OS has a very friendly free kick system making it easy to score. (2) Never try a sliding tackle in the area.



Soccer '97

■ PLAYERS:	Two
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	June 97
■ PRICE	£44.99

This must be one of the cheekiest moves in video gaming history: when Eidos realised how unsuccessful the Olympic licence had been they decided to rehash it and make some proper money. Eventually they reworked the graphics and the contents and rereleased it as *Soccer '97*.

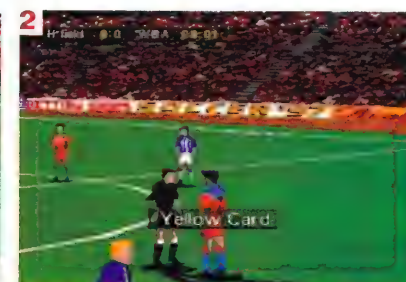
To your average punter this example of corporate avarice would be inexcusable if the game was crap

but fortunately, while it's never going to give the likes of *ISS Pro* a run for its money, it's not a bad game at all. What makes it stand out from the crowd is the speed of the gameplay.

The game does take some time to learn and is rather frustrating when you first start off but after a short while you'll be pulling off heroic headers, superb shots or simple shimmys like a professional. It's not the best game by any means but it won't let you down.

The fastest football game on the PlayStation. Which is high praise indeed.

VERDICT 6/10



(1) Avoid silly tackles in the area. (2) The referees are very strict and don't worry about sending a player off. (3) It's certainly easy to score with your head. (4) Strategy is easy.



adidas Power Soccer International '97



[1] With on-screen controls it's easy to know exactly which button to press. **[2]** You often find times when there's only you and three defenders in the area. **[3]** Don't expect to be able to tell which player is which.

■ PLAYERS:	Two
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	April '97
■ PRICE	£29.99

The game with the fouls. At the time of release this was one of the top football games on the PlayStation but time hasn't been too kind to *APSI '97* with the graphics looking chunky and dated.

One of the best aspects to *APSI '97* is the huge range of tournaments available. Releasing it in the middle of *Euro '96* Psygnosis included all the right tournament placings along with an International tournament and a World Cup option.

As far as the gameplay in *APSI '97* goes, it's nigh-on identical to the first version so, unless you're desperate to get hold of the International line-up and all the new teams which come with it, you'll be miles better off picking up the platinum version of the original.

This falls quite squarely in the good but not so brilliant camp, hence the middle of the road score it's picked up.

VERDICT 5/10



Onside Soccer

■ PLAYERS:	Two
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	Xmas '96
■ PRICE	£34.99

Onside Soccer: if there was ever a more anonymous PlayStation football game we're buggered if we can think of it. Hailing from the makers of *Busby 3D*, *Onside Soccer* offered the potentially great combo of footballing action and management. It could have been marvellous. Instead it turned into an infernal pile of arse.

The actual gaming side was inept. But then, this was a work of art



compared to the management. There are so few options that it seems cheeky to call it a management sim.

We ranked it as one of the lowest football games and the march of time has pushed it further down the scale.

Anonymous at best - at worst it barely stands up to any kind of scrutiny. Avoid.

VERDICT 1/10



[1] Never a classic this one. **[2]** But it does have one of the most realistic stadiums about. **[3]** The replay mode is pretty snazzy as well.

Player Manager



■ PLAYERS:	One
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	Jan '97
■ PRICE	£44.99

Being the first ever football management game on the PlayStation meant it was always going to have a modicum of success given the enormous popularity the genre affords. It's such a shame then, that it wasn't executed properly otherwise it would have been the classic that everyone is screaming out for.

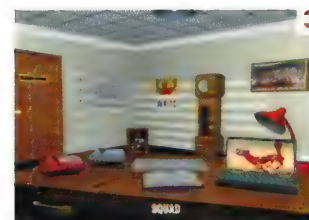
Everything you would expect is in there but the detail sets new standards in minimalism... if you want

to change the formation you're limited to three or four. Buy and sell your players? It's as simple as nodding your head; no bargaining, no trading; just yes or no.

There seems to be a consensus with developers that management games need to be dumbed down before they can make the transition to the PlayStation and this one's been dumbed down so much as to decimate its IQ. Let's hope the sequel will be better... it has to be be.

You'd be a lot better off waiting for the latest version to grace the shops.

VERDICT 3/10



[1] That's Bristol Rovers then - it says so on the sign and everything. **[2]** Look at these fellas - household names the lot of them. **[3]** You will see this summary screen very, very often. It gets mighty dull.

Goal Storm



[1] Have you ever heard of these players? [2] Looks painful. [3] Safe in his hands. [4] Nice graphics. [5] Cracking save.



■ PLAYERS:	Two
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	Jan '96
■ PRICE	£29.99

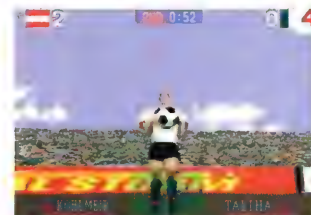
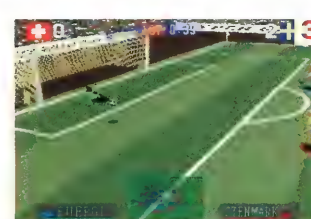
One of the first footy games to reach the PlayStation is, astonishingly, one of the most fun. Featuring an early, primitive version of the *ISS Pro* engine *Goal Storm* offers a fine, if simple game of football. Alongside the gameplay there are tons of exhibition and tournament options to keep the solitary player busy for ages. Oh, and thanks to the use of sprites *Goal Storm* runs at a cracking pace too.

In the end this is a simple game

which, courtesy of its age, you should be able to find nice and cheap in any second hand shop.

Great gameplay but it really has started to show its age. Not terrible by any means though.

VERDICT 6/10



ISS Deluxe



Be careful to stay on your feet as the refs are very keen on chucking out card after card. You will lose players.

■ PLAYERS:	Two
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	Jan '97
■ PRICE	£29.99

Back in the days of the Super Nintendo console there was one football game which reigned supreme... Konami's *International Superstar Soccer Deluxe*. Featuring incredibly realistic animation and more gameplay than you could waggle a bloody large stick at, it took the machine by storm. Years later Konami decided to see if they could repeat the success and ported it to the PlayStation.

The result was a highly playable, if dated-looking, football game. Unfortunately, apart from playability we can't think of any reason why you would want to buy this outmoded game any more. In all honesty, there's no real reason to buy *ISS Deluxe* unless you're hankering after a bit of top SNES action. Leave it alone and get your mitts on the Platinum sequel.

OK, so this is good enough but there really seems little point when *Pro* is out there costing just £20

VERDICT 6/10



[1,2] Okay, so it looks really old and crusty but it plays wonderfully. Just ignore the looks and get stuck in.



Striker '96

■ PLAYERS:	Four
■ ORIGINAL RELEASE	Jan '96
■ PRICE	£29.99

When it came to SNES footie games *Striker* was one of the best. Eschewing the realistic approach of *FIFA*, this went all out for the cartoony, playable aspect. This has been transferred perfectly to the PlayStation version.

One of the best features of the game is the incredible swerve the player can add to the ball. Okay, so this meant you often had four or five soft spots where a goal was

guaranteed but there was something special about scoring straight from kick off.

While this was never destined to be a classic, if you find it deep in the bargain baskets for under a tenner you might find yourself having a lot of dated fun. It was awarded six two years ago but now there's no way it could be awarded anything like that, so we have given it a four. Time hasn't been too kind to this game but other games still stand up.

A PlayStation antique. Alas, it hasn't aged well at all. Steer well clear.

VERDICT 4/10



[1] Use the radar to check where your players are. [2] The game starts off looking flash. [3] The indoor game is always good for a laugh. [4] They do walk in a very strange fashion.



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SUPER CROSS '98 • FRENZY • N2O • CRIME KILLER

• WARGAMES • BLAST RADIUS • XENOCRACY •

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER '98 - **ALL REVIEWED**

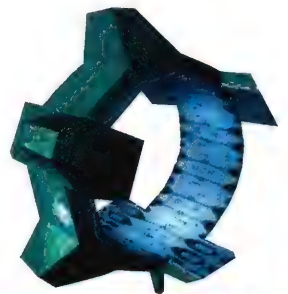
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So the World Cup, despite some high quality football, was a bit of a let down for British football fans, all in all. Still, at least it kept us going through the normally defunct summer months. Now there's just time for a short breather before the world's top internationals make their way back to their clubs and prepare for what promises to be a cracking season... the real thing, played out over 10 emotional months. We've teamed up with our mates at Total Football to bring you a comprehensive preview of the action coming our way - every top flight Scottish and English club's prospects are assessed by the fans themselves. Total Football have even stuck their necks out and predicted the tables at the end of the season, while we fall back on PlayStation power to provide the definitive Sony driven Race For The Title...

98/99 Season Preview

Football

Football Football Football

Arsenal

■ Club colours: Red and white ■ Nickname: The Gunners ■ Club
Captain: Tony Adams ■ Sponsors: JVC ■ Last season - League: 1st,
FA Cup: Winners, Lge Cup: Semi-Final ■ Player of the Season (1997/98):
Dennis Bergkamp

Fan's prediction 1st TF Prediction 1st Your Prediction Title odds 9/4

Arsenal keep Arsène about

I blame the Arsenal board. I mean, they must have known it would cause havoc introducing so many new, talented players who hadn't the faintest understanding of our playing style. Especially players with natural flair and ability like Overmars, Bergkamp and Anelka. It's no good blaming Arsène Wenger – the board appointed him, and his reputation for flamboyant coaching at Monaco wasn't exactly a secret. Admittedly, with a name like Wenger, they thought he was German and as such could be relied on to continue

our dour tradition, but you've got to admit that his appointment was just asking for trouble. The fact is that our hard-earned reputation has been destroyed – we have done the Double, again, and scoring shedloads of goals didn't help either. It was bad enough when we lost our 'Lucky Arsenal' tag many years ago, but to now lose our 'Boring Arsenal' tag... Well, it's not on, is it?

Of course, Arsène is not your typical 'the boys done good' coach. He's an intelligent and articulate bloke with a droll sense of humour, who regularly out-lips Ferguson.

Perhaps that's his main strength – he takes his football seriously, but not so seriously as to instill fear of failure into the players. He's a clever bloke all right. But my real concern is the praise we are getting from TV pundits – when Alan Hansen pays us compliments we know we're in trouble. Still, considering our tradition of lousing up when you least expect it, everything should be back to normal when we go into Europe next season. I can hear it now: "Ach, they're not the side they were, Des."

MAJOR I BURY



THE GUNNERS FILE

Manager: Arsène Wenger 10/10 – appointed in September 1996, he took over a club in utter turmoil. He was the butt of the pundits' jokes, but who's laughing now – or coolly smiling, anyway?

Boardroom bigwig: David Dein 8/10 – a close friend of Arsène Wenger for the last 11 years, he was responsible for bringing the Frenchman to the club

Player to watch: Nicolas Anelka – his game has benefited greatly now there's some grit in addition to his natural pace, elegant ball skills, and shooting ability
Player to get shot of: None – we're trying to build up the squad

Bad boy: Wrighty – but he doesn't mean it. He's just a bit enthusiastic

Style of play: Everyone talks about our defence, but the real key is the midfielders' quick movement into space and confident first-touch passing

Best of enemies: Tottenham Hotspur – them down the

road. Chelsea may be the second London team nowadays, and thrashing Man U is great, but the real enemy is still them down the road

Terrace song: "One nil to the Arznavul"

Best Web site: <http://www.arsenal.co.uk>

Strangest merchandise: The oddest is probably the all-over body spray. I Guess Seaman Condoms would be too much to ask for...

Top local boozer: Under Wenger, not even the fans are allowed booze. Away fans can try The Drayton, just across from Drayton Park station

If only we still had: Liam Brady (73-80) – now in charge of youth coaching, he was indisputably the greatest ever left midfielder. Imagine him and Dennis in the same team. Awesome!

If Arsenal were a drink they would be: The Cannonball Run – French Champagne, topped with slices of Dutch Edam and followed by four stout chasers



DID YOU KNOW?
Bergkamp won't fly after USA '94

DID YOU KNOW?
We paid £7 million for Stan Collymore

Aston Villa

■ Club colours: Claret & blue with white shorts ■ Nickname: The Villains
■ Club Captain: Gareth Southgate ■ Sponsors: Under offers ■ Last
season – League: 7th; FA Cup: 5th Round, Lge Cup: 3rd round ■ Player of
the Season (1997/98): Dwight Yorke

Fan's prediction 10th TF Prediction 6th Your Prediction Title odds 25/1

Villains verdict in the balance

This season could go one of two ways. Scenario one, runs something like this... After the incredible finale to the '97/'98 season – which saw European qualification clinched just two months after relegation was a real possibility – the newly galvanised club sign the Bolton midfield general Alan Thompson to nurture the emerging genius of Lee Hendrie. The game but limited Gary Charles and Allan Wright are finally pensioned off to make room for a pair of gifted full-backs, while the Board shell out £10 million on

the winner of the World Cup Golden Boot. The new forward forms a formidable partnership with Dwight Yorke, who shows his appreciation by signing a seven-year contract effectively keeping him at the club for the rest of his career. Record season ticket sales ensue as Villa engage in a thrilling tussle for the League title, but fixture congestion means that they have to settle for the Runners-up slot and the Champions' League. Consolation is provided by the UEFA and FA Cups arriving in B6.

Then there's scenario two... Savo's gone, Steve

Staunton's going, Fabio Cappello wants Mark Bosnich for his new team and Dwight Yorke is gradually being edged towards the door marked 'Old Trafford This Way'. Even Gareth Southgate has been making noises about leaving. Their replacements adhere to the old Villa tradition of 'sell high, buy cheap', while Stan Collymore continues to be the biggest squanderer of talent since George Best. We get knocked out of the UEFA Cup in the first round, and finally slump to a mid-table position.

DAVE WOODHALL



THE VILLAINS FILE

Manager: John Gregory 9/10 – next season will see his true worth

Boardroom bigwig: Doug Ellis 2/10 – egotistical, surrounded by sycophants and showing an increasing lack of ability to run a top club

Player to watch: Dwight Yorke – the best all-round striker in the League over the past three seasons

Player to get shot of: None

Bad boy: None

Style of play: Inconsistency taken to ridiculous new heights

Best of enemies: Position vacant – if we ever get a local team in the same division, they might get the job

Terrace song: None – singing's not cool anymore

Best Web site: <http://freespace.virgin.net/mac.mccolgan/h&u/index.htm>

Strangest merchandise: Savo bandannas (although they're discontinued now)

Top local boozer: Witton Arms on Witton Road is the nearest pub to the ground to accept away fans

If only we still had: Paul McGrath (89-97) – because perfection cannot be replaced

If Villa were a drink they would be: A Collymore Slammer – an overpriced cocktail that soon loses its appeal – packs a hell of a punch, though

Fan's prediction 3rd **TF Prediction** 7th **Your Prediction** **Title odds** 16/1

Consolidation at Ewood Park

Blackburn Rovers made an excellent start to last season, which, after the relegation struggle of the season before, shocked quite a few people - their own fans included. But, following some terrible results late in the season, the Ewood faithful were happy to settle for a UEFA Cup place. So at least now we can look forward to Europe once again after the poor showing in the Champions' League and the Trelleborg embarrassment.

During the summer Roy Hodgson brought in Darren

Peacock who's on a free from Newcastle, but the big news was the arrival of Kevin Davies from Southampton. Costing a cool £7.25 million, the forward looks like an excellent, if pricey, prospect. Indeed, with Sutton banging them home like a good 'un, and Tim Sherwood, Billy McKinlay and Damien Duff doing their stuff in midfield, the only problem seems to be in defence, specifically the left-back area. With the loss of Le Saux and the injury of Gary Croft, last season we were subjected to the torment of Jason Wilcox in defence. So we really need some extra

cover if we want to avoid a repeat performance.

The hope for this year is that we maintain what we started last season. While the League Championship may not return to Ewood in '99, a Cup would be appreciated. Roy Hodgson is confident that the team is getting stronger and can do better than last season, and if we can avoid the dodgy performances that dogged us last season (most notably from Alan Fittis), then another trip up the famous steps may not be out of the question.

CRAIG HUMMER



THE ROVERS FILE

Manager: Roy Hodgson (9/10) - turned the club around after the Ray Harford debacle. Probably the next England boss

Boardroom bigwig: Jack Walker (10/10) - because he loves the club and is absolutely loaded

Player to watch: Kevin Davies - new signing, excellent attacker and very skillful. Probably the second best young attacker in the country. First place goes to another young lad called Owen

Player to get shot of: Martin Dahlin - total waste of money. Roy Hodgson's only bad move. Had a good World Cup in '94 and seems to be living off that

Bad boy: Billy McKinlay - in the David Batty mould. Doesn't catch the eye but you know he's there

Style of play: Hard to break down, solid midfield with excellent attacking ability (on their day)

Best of enemies: Premiership rival - Man Utd after a few close run seasons when the Premiership started. General

rivals - Burnley

Terrace song: Anything about Burnley, the interesting bits are unprintable

Best Web site: I would say mine (<http://www.craig.mcmill.com>), but Philip Nolan's pages at <http://www.pnolan.demon.co.uk/bRFC> are better

Strangest merchandise: The Rovers raincoat with 'Nutmeg' emblazoned on the back. Obviously devoted to Jason Wilcox in the left-back role

Top local boozier: Shamus O'Donnells, right outside the ground (a nightmare to get in on match days but an excellent pint of your best Irish when it's quiet)

If only we still had: Alan Shearer (92-96) - do you really need a reason?

If Blackburn were a drink they would be: A zombie - because you think you can handle it and the next thing you know you're on your backside and wondering who and where you are



DID YOU KNOW?

On December 12, 1891 the Rovers' goalkeeper, was the sole player in a game vs Burnley. When Burnley kicked-off, he at once claimed off-side.

Charlton Athletic

Club colours: Red and white **Nickname:** The Addicks **Club Captain:** Mark Kinsella **Sponsors:** Mesh Computers **Last season - League:** 4th (Play-off winners); **FACup:** 4th Round, Lge Cup: 1st Round **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Mark Kinsella

Fan's prediction 17th **TF Prediction** 20th **Your Prediction** **Title odds** 150/1

It's buy, buy or bye, bye...

This time last year, we were all excited about the record-breaking signing of Super Clive Mendonca. Now, with a newly promoted Charlton and my head still ringing with the chant of "We are going up", I'm starting to hear rumours about proven internationals who might be coming to the Valley next season. Ian Wright, London boy, no longer in Arsène Wenger's plans - his pace and crossing would be an asset. Rob Lee, Charlton youth product, is a London boy who could return. And Lee Bowyer's having a

hard time at Elland Road - he'd get a place on the bench.

Though it was Mendonca and new Eire international Mark Kinsella who made the difference between the also-rans of 96/97 and last season's promotion winners, Alan Curbishley (London boy) is expected to continue to invest in local talent where possible. So we're unlikely to see any superstars of the World Cup getting on the train at Charing Cross. But there is money to spend and Eddie Youds is the only member of the promotion-winning squad to have any Premiership experience. We need two or three more

players to strengthen the spine of the team.

Curbishley said at the start of the season that if "clubs like Charlton don't go up in the next couple of years they never will." We've made it now and another 4,000 seats have been built in the West Stand, bringing the capacity up to 20,000. Now we've got Premiership status to go with our first-class stadium, we intend to keep it. With a bit of the class that took us up to the Premiership that's the aim.

JON PALMER



DID YOU KNOW?

Clive Mendonca is Charlton's most expensive signing ever at £700,000



THE ADDICKS FILE

Manager: Alan Curbishley 10/10 - we'd already come a long way under Curbishley. Now we've come all the way. He couldn't believe it either

Boardroom bigwig: Mick Gebbett 10/10 - a shopowner in Greenwich Market, he represents the fans on the board and personifies the links between the club and the community

Player to watch: Kevin Lisbie - with little experience in the first team, it will be difficult for him in the Premiership but he looks the next star

Player to get shot of: We're building a team, not dismantling one

Bad boy: There is a policy of sacking bad boys nowadays - or selling them to Leeds

Style of play: 'Quality possession' with the ability to play directly, too

Best of enemies: Crystal Palace - because they're the most successful club in South East London. Apart from us

Terrace song: Last year it was "We Are Going Up"

Best Web site: <http://www.charlton-athletic.co.uk>

Strangest merchandise: The latest Squeeze single Down in the Valley

Top local boozier: Royal Oak, Charlton Lane

If only we still had: Rob Lee (83-93) - if he'd come through now instead of when we were a selling club, he wouldn't have gone to Newcastle in the first place

If Charlton were a drink they would be: Anything that goes down well when you're going up

Chelsea

■ **Club colours:** Royal blue & white with amber trim ■ **Nickname:** The Blues ■ **Club Captain:** Denis Wise ■ **Sponsors:** Autoglass ■ **Last season – League:** 4th, **FA Cup:** 3rd Round, **Lge Cup:** Winners ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Mark Hughes

Fan's prediction 1st TF Prediction 4th Your Prediction Title odds 12/1

Going for the Quadruple

Last season there was only one team in Europe. We flew the blue flag in every corner of the continent and emerged victorious, flag billowing and wafting, yelling "Chelsea are back!" And there was more. Two cups, fourth in the Premiership and Frank Sinclair gets to play in the World Cup. I had to pinch myself so many times to make sure I wasn't dreaming that I got a rash the size of Liechtenstein on my left butt cheek. But now a new campaign looms large with new challenges and adventures ahead. Well,

okay, they're the same old challenges and adventures, but each new season is a rebirth, an old skin has been shed and a glistening new one is in its place. And frankly, it can't come soon enough.

This season, Chels are going to better last season's glories. In comes the brilliant Laudrup, the crafty Casiraghi and, hopefully, the delightful Dessailly. With Babayero returning and maybe one or two purchases to bolster the defence, this season we are surely going to crack the big one. I expect Vialli to pick himself less and

less and let the outstanding Flo and the impish Zola feed off the inevitably constant stream of crosses from Laudrup and Le Saux. (Not entirely sure where Casiraghi fits into all this – maybe we're looking at a revolutionary 4-3-4 formation.) On top of that, penetrating runs from Poyet and DiMatteo, lots of smiling from Wisey and lots of gesticulating from Petrescue, should ensure we retain the two trophies we won last year whilst also adding the Premiership and FA Cup. You ain't seen nothing yet. **IVOR BADDIEL**



THE BLUES FILE

Manager: Gianluca Vialli 10/10 – the man is Italian aristocracy so he certainly knows how to deal with Chelsea peasants

Boardroom bigwig: Ken Bates 5/10 – one of the nicest guys in the game. Keeps well out of the way and lets others get on with running the club. You'd hardly know he was there

Player to watch: Frank LeBouef – the man is here, there and everywhere, and wherever he is, his mercurial talents, be they defending, passing, dribbling or shooting are just that, mercurial (whatever that may mean)

Player to get shot of: Andy Myers

Bad boy: Denis Wise – he's just like a crab, ripping away at your legs with his pincers and then sloping off sideways to avoid the ref

Style of play: Mercurial (see above)

Best of enemies: Arsenal, because they're Arsenal

Terrace song: "Ten Men Went To Mow"

Best Web site: <http://chelseafans-no.com/>

Strangest merchandise: Chelsea fridge freezer

Top local boozier: Imperial Arms

If only we still had: Graham Wilkins (72-82) – Though overshadowed by his brother Ray, Graham was the true genius at Chelsea

If Chelsea were a drink they would be: A Sleeping Beauty – this is basically water with capsules of whiskey, vodka, rum and gin. The capsules take 27 years to release the alcohol contained therein, but when they do it's worth it



DID YOU KNOW?

Chelsea have only lost twice at Old Trafford in 31 years (23 matches) with an incredible record of 2 losses, 11 draws and 10 wins

DID YOU KNOW?

Gary Gillespie used to live in a house which was on my route to school. Every morning his wife would take in the milk wearing a little nightie. Me and my mates used to hide behind a hedge to get a glimpse

Coventry City

■ **Club colours:** Sky blue and navy ■ **Nickname:** The Sky Blues ■ **Club Captain:** Dion Dublin ■ **Sponsors:** Isuzu ■ **Last season – League:** 11th, **FA Cup:** 6th round, **Lge Cup:** 4th Round ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Dion Dublin

Fan's prediction 6th TF Prediction 8th Your Prediction Title odds 66/1

Nothing but blue skies...

Last season went like this: mid-table mediocrity – what joy; Quarter Final of the FA Cup – now, steady on; in with a chance of Europe – this is becoming surreal; Dion Dublin joint top scorer in the Premiership – I half expected Graham

Chapman to appear in an army officer's uniform shouting "Stop it now, you're just being silly". This is only the second season of the 25 I can remember when Coventry has not played a major role in the relegation 'dog fight', and I must admit, it feels a bit weird. And, with Arsenal

strolling away with the Premiership, the last few weeks of last season were er... well, boring.

Now don't get me wrong, I prefer this stress free April/May type thing but, as Catchphrase's Roy Walker would say: "It's good, but it's not right". Hopefully I'll get used to it over the next few seasons as the Ginger midget consolidates our position as a top 10 team. Who knows, I might sip my beer and soak up the August sun with great expectations of the season to come. That'd be brilliant. Not just the deluded optimism which replaces rational

thought in all footy fans in August but well-founded, results-based-£16m Transfer Coup! Why I Chose Coventry – Zidane-type reasons. Okay, maybe I'm going off on a little flight of fancy but at this point last year I wrote that the mighty Sky Blues would be fighting for a place in Europe and everyone laughed – even Graham Kelly.

So, the last Premiership Champions of the 20th Century? Maybe that's not attainable. But in Europe for the millennium? Definitely. **JOSS BOWN**



THE SKY BLUE FILE

Manager: Gordon 'The Nutter' Strachan. 6/10 – His crazed rantings to camera following the Arsenal game last season were Daliesque:

Interviewer: "Now's your chance to speak to the nation." Ginge: "Not everyone will be listening. There may be people out shopping"

Boardroom bigwig: Brian Richardson 9/10 – planning a 40,000-seater, out-of-town stadium. Top man

Player to watch: Dion Dublin – he scores goals, he stops opponents, he's good in bed, plays the sax, has a cheeky smile and bald head. He should have a go at solving the Middle East crisis

Player to get shot of: We're happy with what we've got

Bad boy: No-one springs to mind. Perhaps we ought to bring back David Speedie...

Style of play: Cultured hoofing

Best of enemies: Aston Villa – although one suspects that the Villa couldn't give a toss

Terrace song: Cambridge Boating Song with lyrics by Jimmy Hill

Best Web site: <http://www.cfc.co.uk>

Strangest merchandise: That'll be the Sky Blue Coffin

Top local boozier: The Sky Blue Pub, right outside the Spion Kop/East Stand

If only we still had: Ian Wallace (76-80) – he had a ginger afro and looked great in the famous brown away kit. There just aren't enough ginger afros in football.

If Coventry were a drink they would be: Lager & Syrup Of Figs – for obvious reasons



Derby County

■ **Club colours:** White and black ■ **Nickname:** The Rams ■ **Club Captain:** Igor Stimac ■ **Sponsors:** TBA ■ **Last season – League:** 10th; FA Cup: 4th Round, Lge Cup: 4th Round ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Francesco Bariano

Fan's prediction 9th TF Prediction 11th Your Prediction Title odds 100/1

Derby shepherd in a new era

After their unexpected early promotion in Jim Smith's first season, Derby have gone from strength to strength and if their form continues, they'll be playing in Europe before the new millennium kicks in. Foreign turf will hold no fears for the Bald Eagle's inexpensively assembled collection of rising stars. By the year 2000 we could regularly field an XI brought together from around the world with Argentinians playing alongside Jamaicans and Estonians. Although 97/98 saw The Rams establish themselves

in Premiership Land while successfully moving to a home that befits their lofty ambitions, it wasn't all plain-sailing. We may have given Man Utd a run for their money, hammered Arsenal and Blackburn and turned over many other 'big' clubs comfortably, but there were grey days – most markedly home defeats to Leicester and Leeds and poor showings against the relegated three. Jim knows his squad needs strengthening if it is to progress. Even before the World Cup, he was looking to sign new players, including Horacio Carbonari, a young defender with great potential

from Argentina, Stephan Schnoor, a midfielder from Hamburg and Luiso, a striker from Vincenza.

Supporters at Derby's regularly full ground (currently undergoing further building work) realise that a club of our intermediate stature won't be lifting any trophies just yet, but with excellent administrative support, Steve McClaren's coaching know-how and Jim's encyclopaedic knowledge of every footballer on the planet, there are more exciting times ahead at Derby during 98/99. MARK ALDRIDGE

THE RAMS FILE

Manager: Jim Smith 10/10 – his proven track record of unearthing top-quality players (from Ferdinand to Horacio 'The Bazooka' Carbonari)

Boardroom bigwig: Lionel Pickering 10/10 – just look at the ground

Player to watch: Paulo Wanchopé – a player blessed with a ferocious shot, incredible pace and comic charm

Player to get shot of: After a promotion and two close encounters with Europe, who am I to criticise?

Bad boy: Stefano Erainio – totally misunderstood

Style of play: Total Football (occasionally)

Best of enemies: Forest. Words cannot express our hatred of the Red Shite

Terrace song: "We are Derby, super Derby, super Rams..."

Best Web site: <http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~nickwheat/ramsnets.html>

Strangest merchandise: Toilet seat with The Ram logo

– most folk reckon one with a Forest emblem would sell better

Top local boozier: The Brunswick on the station approach

If only we still had: Alan Hinton (69-75) – we haven't had a decent left-winger since him

If Derby were a drink they would be: The League Of Nations – a shot of spirits from each of the players' native countries – rum from Jamaica, whisky from Scotland and god knows what from Estonia...



DID YOU KNOW?
Several clubs claim there are gypsy curses on their grounds, and Derby's one. But, when the curse that never actually existed was lifted in 1946 Derby won the FA Cup

Everton

■ **Club colours:** Royal blue and white ■ **Nickname:** Historically the Toffees. Now The Blues, or Blue Boys. ■ **Club Captain:** Duncan Ferguson ■ **Sponsors:** One2One ■ **Last season – League:** 17th; FA Cup: 3rd Round, Lge Cup: 3rd Round ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** TBA

Fan's prediction 10th TF Prediction 16th Your Prediction Title odds 50/1

The blue tide must turn

Two words to make an Evertonian splutter with rage: Peter Johnson. He's the Liverpool fan who bought control of the club, made an enormous paper profit on his investment, then sat on his cash while the team almost went down last season. Poor old Howard Kendall, prior to his dismissal was forced to sell the likes of Andy Hinchcliffe and Gary Speed, while replacing them with a bunch of Sheffield United cast-offs. When Mitch Ward, Carl Tiler and Don Hutchison arrived from Bramall Lane, it looked as though

Howard was building a team to compete in Division One before we were even relegated.

That we survived on the last day of the season had far more to do with Chelsea and Gianluca Vialli's professionalism than anything Everton did themselves. But survive we did, and where there's life, etc etc. So we can look forward to another season in the top flight.

Grounds for optimism? Johnson might go one day. And we won the Youth Cup, so our youngsters are the best in the land. In a few years, (unless they all sign for

Liverpool in the meantime like former Evertonians Rush, Fowler, McManaman and Owen to name but four) we should have a great team once again. But until they are all grown up, we'll have to hope new man Walter Smith (ex Rangers, and almost Sheffield Wednesday man) knows enough to keep us in the Premier League, and perhaps we might even have the odd Cup run to keep us going. At the moment I'd settle for an anonymous mid-table season – anything but another last-day heart-stopper. ALEX MURPHY

DID YOU KNOW?
The strange lower featured on the club's crest is an old look-up where drunks were kept until they'd sobered up. It still stands, but isn't used any more



THE BLUE BOYS FILE

Manager: Howard Kendall 8/10 – it's not his fault but he still got the boot

Boardroom bigwig: Peter Johnson 0/10 – it is his fault

Player to watch: Danny Cadamarteri. It's ages since we had the kind of striker with the pace to put the wind up any defence

Player to get shot of: Claus Thomsen. What on earth is he doing in a royal blue shirt?

Bad boy: Slaven Bilic. Not a dirty player, but try telling that to the refereeing community

Style of play: Ineffective

Best of enemies: It was almost Tranmere Rovers. But thanks to Luca Vialli, it's still Liverpool

Terrace song: There hasn't been much to sing about lately. The Frog Chorus by Paul McCartney used to be popular at Christmas games, for some reason. When we beat Bayern Munich in the 1985 Cup-Winners' Cup Semi-Final the entire ground hummed The Dambusters theme.

That was good

Best Web site: <http://www.evertonfc.com>

Strangest merchandise: A club shirt with the name 'Thomsen' on the back

Top local boozier: The Spellow on Goodison Road

If only we still had: Dixie Dean (1925-37) – sixty goals a season would come in handy about now

If Everton were a drink they would be: The Goodison Sling – mix curacao and vodka then watch as the blue sinks to the bottom

Leeds

■ Club colours: White with yellow and blue ■ Nickname: The Peacocks
 ■ Club Captain: Gary Kelly ■ Sponsors: Packard Bell ■ Last season -
 League: 5th; FACup: 6th Round, Lge Cup: 4th Round ■ Player of the
 Season (1997/98): Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink

Fan's prediction 5th TF Prediction 3rd Your Prediction Title odds 20/1

The Yorkshire team do Dutch

We have scored some goals. We did too. Yes, after the dismal season two years ago, last term was brimful of net billowing tomfoolery. Jerrel Floyd Hasselbaink, the unknown Dutchman of Surinamese extraction arrived from Portugal and, after a slow start, he managed to register on 22 occasions. Jimmy was the man mainly responsible for cementing Leeds' UEFA Cup spot. Wantaway hitman Rod Wallace, who fancies feathering his nest abroad, weighed in with a few and their partnership

flourished, but Rod's dogged refusal to sign a contract led only to bench-warming duties, and Harry Kewell took centre stage.

The major disappointment was United's closed-season signing from Crystal Palace, David Hopkin. He came with a fine record as a goalscoring midfielder. But he was hugely crap. No matter, for Bruno Ribeiro, a Portuguese under-21 international performed with no little aplomb, and Alf-Inge Haaland was competent in the centre.

So what of next season and the UEFA Cup? George

has signed a partner for Jimmy, another unknown Dutchman named Clyde Wijnhard and if they click, we could make an impression in Europe. (Apparently, Gary Kelly does a good Tommy Cooper... Boom, and moreover, boom.) Despite such speculation the Premiership campaign must take precedent, though, but I'd be more than surprised if Leeds can improve on last season's fifth spot, unless George's chequebook is his best-read tome of the summer...

STEVE BRADLEY



THE PEACOCKS FILE

Manager: George Graham 8/10 - gradually improved the team, without spending foolish money

Boardroom bigwig: Peter Ridsdale 7/10 - the board are committed to enhancing the facilities, though many fans want more money spent on star names

Player to watch: Harry Kewell - this frighteningly quick Australian international came up through the youth team and can play in a number of positions, although he prefers a central striking role

Player to get shot of: David Robertson

Bad boy: We haven't really got any nutjobs. Makes a change, eh?

Style of play: Mix and match. Neat passing, and long ball to boot

Best of enemies: Manchester United. No love lost, there. Pennine rivalry and perhaps a smidgeon of jealousy

Terrace song: Raging On Together is the anthem. No swearing, either

Best Web site: <http://www.lufc.co.uk>

Strangest merchandise: Nothing beats the shocking Howard Wilkinson inflatable, depicting him as a modern day Sgt Bilko (Wilko, geddit?)

Top local boozier: The Peacock on Elland Road is reasonably handy for the stadium. Busy though

If only we still had: Some foreign bloke called Cantona played a few games in days of yore (91-92). Looked promising, too. Don't know what happened to him...

If Leeds were a drink they would be: The wine, Up Chateau Creek. Vintage years 1982-1990. We often bottled it back then... And we've just signed up a bloke called Wijnhard



DID YOU KNOW?
 Leeds used to have the tallest floodlights in the history of all things at 251 feet

DID YOU KNOW?
 The toilets at Filbert Street have a sign proclaiming that Leicester are an environmentally friendly club. Anyone who has ventured beyond the signs knows this to be true - judging by the smell, there haven't been any chemicals used for cleaning the area in years

Leicester

■ Club colours: Royal blue and white ■ Nickname: The Foxes or The Filberts
 ■ Club Captain: Stevie Walsh ■ Sponsors: Walkers ■ Last season -
 League: 10th; FACup: 4th Round, Lge Cup: 3rd Round ■ Player of the Season (1997/98): Muzzy Izzet

Fan's prediction 8th TF Prediction 12th Your Prediction Title odds 100/1

Foxes' brush with disaster

So big Martin kept us all sweating a good while before deciding to hang on in at Filbert Street. It's no exaggeration to say that his departure would have been a disaster. One of the strengths of the past two Premiership seasons is that no key players have left. And it's no secret that if the gaffer had gone, some of the players would have done so too, and a major rebuilding job would have been required. Now it's simply a question of the chairman putting the dosh on the table to bring in a few names and

boost the pay structure at the club, something which is long overdue.

With the Boardroom politics hopefully out of the way - although you can never be quite sure at Filbert Street - we can look forward optimistically to the new season. To make progress, however, we desperately need two things: consistency and the ability to stick the ball in the back of the net more often. Fabulous results such as those at witnessed at Old Trafford and Anfield last season contrasted with poor performances and points lost against struggling

sides. If Bruno (along with a new strike partner) does the business throughout the season, we could really go places. The defence performed heroically last term - particularly Matt Elliott and Stevie Walsh - and the midfield provided plenty of inspiration. So, if we can get the forward line-up sorted, 98/99 could turn into a very good year indeed. As I said optimism is the key phrase, but it's a conditional form of optimism, which is the worst kind you can get.

SILVER FOX



THE FOXES FILE

Manager: Martin O'Neill 10/10 - Thank God he stayed! The record speaks for itself. Fantastic, absolutely magnificent - as he might have said

Boardroom bigwig: Sir Rodney Walker 7/10 - got himself out of a hole with Martin O'Neill, but he shouldn't have fallen into it in the first place

Player to watch: Neil Lennon - the inspiration of the midfield - a diamond

Player to get shot of: We don't have anyone that we need to lose

Bad boy: Stevie Walsh - a sinner, but really a saint. He's just so committed!

Style of play: All for one and one for all

Best of enemies: Forest and Derby. Why? Because they're there

Terrace song: When You're Smiling

Best Web site: <http://www.lcfc.co.uk>

Strangest merchandise: Caricature socks of Heskey,

Walsh or Keller

Top local boozier: Half Time Orange, Burnmoor Street

If only we still had: Gary Lineker (78-85) - his goalscoring would be a useful boost in lean spells

If Leicester were a drink what would they be: The Everlasting Filbert Fling - just when you think you've seen the last of your Irish stout, it gets magically topped up again

Liverpool

■ **club colours:** Red ■ **Nickname:** Reds ■ **Club Captain:** Paul Ince ■
 ■ **Sponsors:** Carlsberg ■ **Last season – League:** 3rd; FA Cup: 3rd Round,
 Lge Cup: Semi-Final ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** TBA

Fan's prediction 3rd TF Prediction 5th Your Prediction Title odds 5/1

Pride comes for a fall

Somewhere along the way the plot has been well and truly lost at Fortress Anfield. Once upon a time, when egos were kept in check with lighter pay packets, Scousers used to take pride in the belief that no player was bigger than the club. Note the past tense there – as Steve McManaman persists in trying to single-handedly wreck the creed on which so much success was based, and the rest of the Liverpool lads' heads get as fat as their wallets, the unrest grows apace.

There's no doubting the quality in the current squad. The problem, and it's a sad one, is that there is so much mediocrity to counterbalance it. And while we cry out for a defender of true international status to shore up an alarmingly unstable rearguard – a Fernando Hierro, a Paolo Maldini, heck even a Marcus Babbel – what do we get? Sean Dundee, a striker who only scored three goals last season as his club was relegated from Germany's top division. And with a questionable off-the-pitch attitude. Oh, it's as if the debacle that was Stanley Collymore had never

happened! Fair enough, last season, to beef up our mid-field, we signed Paul Ince. But he's often been too busy interfering in everyone else's job to do his own. And it was yet another season of injury-dominated, unfulfilled promise from Jamie Redknapp. If those two perform next season, there is room for optimism.

So what next? It's going to take a massive effort to stop the whole plot unravelling, and that may finally be beyond Roy Evans and chairman David Moores.
 STEVE MCLEAN



THE REDS FILE

Manager: Roy Evans 7/10 – Steady and getting better, but needs to land a big buy or two

Boardroom bigwig: David Moores 7/10 – has shown faith so far, but lacks the acumen of the late Sir John Smith

Player to watch: Michael Owen – he's dynamic, but then second seasons are always the hardest

Player to get shot of: David James

Bad boy: Paul Ince – a jackal with rabies

Style of play: Gigolos – well-paid, know all the moves, but no passion

Best of enemies: Salford United – could anybody admire blinkered arrogance?

Terrace song: You'll Never Walk Alone

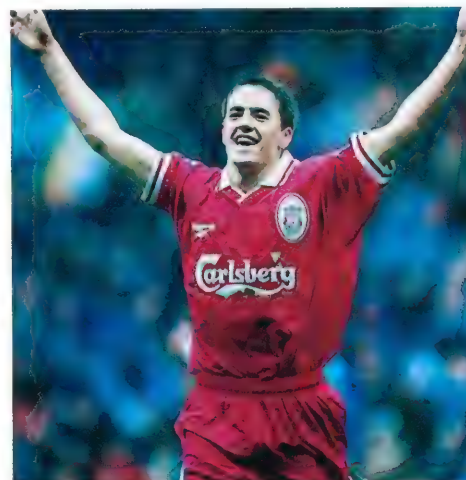
Best Web site: They're all crap

Strangest merchandise: Brushed nylon carpet slippers

Top local boozier: The Arkles, Arkles Road (Anfield Road End)

If only we still had: Graeme Souness (77-84) – a leader with strength, arrogance and style – no current player has this lot

If Liverpool were a drink they would be: Lager shandy – golden, refreshing, sparkling but with no punch



DID YOU KNOW?
 In the first team ever fielded by Liverpool all the players were Scottish

Manchester United

■ **Club colours:** Red, white and black ■ **Nickname:** Red Devils ■ **Club Captain:** Roy Keane ■ **Sponsors:** Sharp ■ **Last season – League:** 2nd; FA Cup: 5th Round, Lge Cup: 3rd Round ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Ryan Giggs

Fan's prediction 1st TF Prediction 1st Your Prediction Title odds 9/4

Boring, boring Man U

So, the nation delights in my prediction from last August coming true – United are currently pot-less, and looking distinctly dowdy-first-wife in comparison to glam new sweethearts Arsenal. The more *nouveau riche* kind of Red will have spent the summer agonising over this empty trophy cabinet, but the hard-core aren't as arsed as you might imagine. Monaco hurt, undeniably, but many will tell you we got what we deserved for being so negative in the first leg. What happened to the United buccaneer spirit of

'66 and '68? Or, indeed, that of '94? The whispered truth is that we're becoming boring – and no true Red can accept that, whatever the silver prize. The replacement of the celestial Cantona by the resolutely earthbound Sheringham turns out to have spoken volumes.

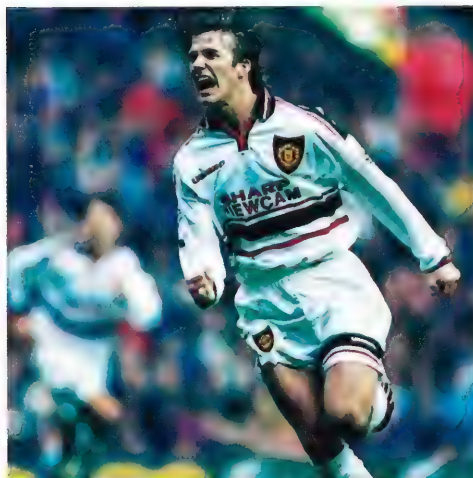
By the time you read this, you'll know if United have splashed out on more than yet another hugely expensive foreign centre-back – and consequently, if Martin Edwards was telling the truth when he claimed that the plc was now ready to invest big-style to win in Europe. (Now that

we've even been caught domestically, you might suggest that this declaration came about four years too late.) Fergie is a 50-something in a hurry, and one expects he'll be holding the club to their word. Reds, though, will probably forgive another failure just as long as the entertainment picks up; recently, bored K-Standers have been finding it more fun to batter hapless visitors on the Old Trafford forecourt than watch Cole and company's baleful predictability.

RICHARD KURT



DID YOU KNOW?
 Man Utd's longest-serving hooligan, Mad Bob, 'owns' 24 police helmets and has been reported dead by his local rag on four separate occasions



THE RED DEVILS FILE

Manager: Alex Ferguson 8/10 – a great salesman, but a patchy buyer; a great motivator, but over-rated as a 'mind game' exponent; England may be his kingdom, but Europe's a jungle

Boardroom bigwig: Martin Edwards 5/10 – rubbish at PR, listening to customers and keeping his feet out of his mouth. Still rather him than Murdoch!

Player to watch: Roy Keane – epitomises modern United: nationally despised, over-excitable, hard as teak, sporadically brilliant and secretly admired by all of you

Player to get shot of: Teddy Sheringham

Bad boy: Roy Keane – if they move he kills 'em

Style of play: Increasingly worthy and centrist (like footballing Lib-Dems) instead of thrillingly extreme. Pity

Best of enemies: Liverpool – 18 titles, four Euro Cups and 45,000 wise-crackers

Terrace song: The ironic Who The F*** Are Man United?

Best Web site: <http://www.redissue.co.uk>

Strangest merchandise: Has to be the unofficial K-stand balaclavas – used for avoiding CCTV detection

Top local boozier: The Dog And Partridge, Chester Road, Stretford

If only we still had: Eric Cantona (92-97) for inspiration and guidance, to keep the cocky kids in order and to slap Cole and Teddy

If Man United were a drink they would be: Boddingtons – the cream of Manchester

Middlesbrough

■ **Club colours:** Red and white ■ **Nickname:** The Boro ■ **Club Captain:** TBA (Smart money's on Andy Townsend) ■ **Sponsors:** Cellnet ■ **Last season – League:** 2nd; **FACup:** 4th Round; **Lge Cup:** Runner's-up ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Paul Merson

Fan's prediction 7th TF Prediction 14th Your Prediction Title odds 33/1

The Boro bounce back

Having shed a bucket-load of *prima donnas* last season we've ended up back in the Premiership with a lean, mean, fighting machine of a side willing to battle like tigers and play to the death. All this and the unfashionable Paul Gascoigne too. Although knowing our luck, by the time this is printed Bryan Robson will have shelled out £50 million on half the Brazilian side and £10 million on George Weah for luck. Some lily-livered souls are looking for some form of mid-table consolidation this season, but I

fancy an all-out European push before falling away at the very last.

However, if we're to make any progress at all this year we need some defensive cover – Gianluca Festa looks good enough for the Premiership, but everyone else has a lot to prove. Another world-class striker wouldn't go amiss either – and not a stropky grey-haired Italian one this time. The rest of the squad should just about cut it – obviously our chairman Steve Gibson's aim is to be a genuine Premiership force within a few seasons, and we seem

better equipped to achieve that this time around. Money has been spent on improving the squad as a whole rather than lashing out cash we can't afford on two or three superstars. Hopefully, Robbo and Gibbo have learned from our Premiership nightmare last time, and we can move onto yet greater success.

I only hope we don't go on another Cup run this year – trips to Wembley are just so *passé* now, darlings. See you in the top half, suckers!

BOB FISCHER



THE BORO FILE

Manager: Bryan Robson 7/10 – dab hand with signings, but his tactical approach is not always so convincing. Allows himself to be overwhelmed by emotion...

Boardroom bigwig: Chairman Steve Gibson 10/10 – more money than sense, thankfully – I would crawl across broken glass to stick flagpoles in his poo

Player to watch: Boggle-eyed Geordie striker Alun Armstrong, named after local hardman actor. Bright feet, bright future, bright peroxide hair. Nice!

Player to get shot of: Willowy sap Mikkel "Wendy" Beck

Bad boy: Local boozy porker Phil Stamp. Four stone overweight and dirty as hell

Style of play: Good days – Brazil 1970. Bad days – Barnsley 1997. A trifle schizophrenic

Best of enemies: Modest Newcastle United. Toon Army? Goin' Doon army more like!

Terrace song: "Boro, Boro, Boro, Boro, Boro, Boro, Bo-ro" (to the tune of Amazing Grace. Simplicity is beauty)

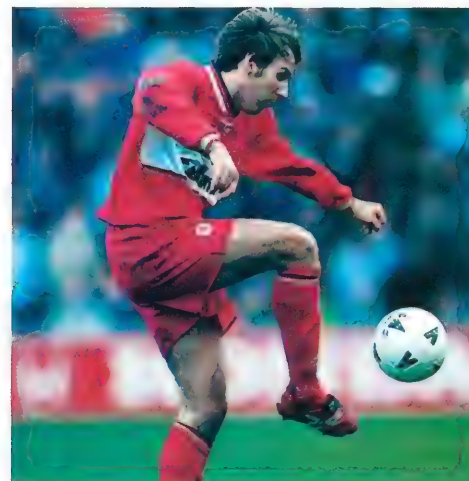
Best Web site: <http://www.tees.net>

Strangest merchandise: Rear car lights that flash up "Boro" while braking. Proud owners are advised not to slow down in Sunderland city centre

Top local boozer: The Cornerhouse, 8 Exchange Place – drink's evil, though

If only we still had: Saturnine Scottish striker Bernie Slaven (1985-93). Zillions of goals combined with Pistols-esque punk attitude that endeared him to all

If Boro were a drink they would be: An expensive red wine that goes down a treat. Comes up again shortly after, though



DID YOU KNOW?

Uri Geller claims he hid a "magical ball" in the stadium wall to inspire Boro to European domination. Naturally, we're still waiting

DID YOU KNOW?

Tony Blair is a Newcastle fan and even went to a game once. Allegedly.

Newcastle

■ **Club colours:** Black and white ■ **Nickname:** The Magpies or The Toon ■ **Club Captain:** Robert Lee ■ **Sponsors:** Newcastle Brown Ale ■ **Last season – League:** 13th; **FACup:** Runner's-up; **Lge Cup:** 5th Round ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** TBA

Fan's prediction 5th TF Prediction 10th Your Prediction Title odds 20/1

Geordies just wanna have fun

How times have changed for Newcastle fans. Last season we competed in the Champions' League and reached the FA Cup Final, but it was still a crap year. The more you win it seems, the harder it is to take defeat – especially when it is combined with dull, desperately unattractive tactics. I don't know how it looks to the rest of the country, but from where I stand Newcastle are just the most bizarre club you can support. On the one hand we take Barcelona apart in the Champions' League, and then are very nearly

humbled by Stevenage. Our best player was out for the majority of the season with a freak injury, most of the Board resigned, and then, when we did finally make it to Wembley, we played with only one striker – try explaining that to your grandchildren! Have we been unlucky with injuries? Have we got bad players, or just players who are playing badly? Isn't Dalglish up to it, or is it just a one-season blip in an otherwise exemplary career? Why are there more questions than answers?

As ever, the new season will start full of hope,

however there are a few dents in the SS Newcastle that need urgent attention, and Kenny has to show us he is the man to put us back on course. Big money has to be made available, and Dalglish must pull in some big signings to restore us as real competition to the likes of Arsenal and Man Utd. Over the previous four or five years we have seen that there's something better than mediocrity. Success and entertainment have gone hand in hand, and that is the standard we now expect.

MARK JENSEN



THE MAGPIES FILE

Manager: Kenny Dalglish 3/10 – a great managerial track record, but last season was a disaster. Most of his signings failed to do the business, and his contempt for the press is both amusing and irritating

Boardroom bigwig: John Hall 9/10 – Hall and Keegan transformed Newcastle, and realised the potential of the club. John Hall gets things done

Player to watch: Nicos Dabizaz – a Greek centre-half who has fitted in immediately. Strong, quick and majestic in the air

Player to get shot of: Des Hamilton

Bad boy: David Batty – being competitive is fine, but the number of cautions he's been getting for dissent is unacceptable

Style of play: Boring. The 98/99 season must see change

Best of enemies: Sunderland – our nearest and dearest neighbours

Terrace song: Blaydon Races

Best Web site: <http://www.themag.co.uk>

Strangest merchandise: The club's official Cup Final record

Top local boozer: Idols, Newgate Street

If only we still had: Peter Beardsley (83-87 and 93-97) – a creative and extremely exciting Geordie in his heyday

If Newcastle were a drink what would they be: The Molotov – a potent mixture of lemonade and brown ale celebrating Newcastle's explosive style. Was inexplicably served flat last season



Nottingham Forest

■ **Club colours:** Red, Black and white ■ **Nickname:** The Reds, The Tricky Trees or The Garibaldi ■ **Club Captain:** 'Super' Colin Cooper ■ **Sponsors:** Pinnacle Insurance ■ **Last season** – League: 1st, FACup: 3rd Round, Lge Cup: 2nd Round ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Pierre Van Hooijdonk

Fan's prediction 16th TF Prediction 17th Your Prediction Title odds 66/1

Money's too tight to mention

So we won the league, and in Pierre Van Hooijdonk had the best striker outside the Premiership. But in our ambitions to see the club restored as a top-flight certainty, last season's success was a mere necessity. When the Premiership formed, Forest were too good to go down. Two seasons ago they were too good again. Now that the yo-yo effect has settled in no-one dare suggest Forest will be anything but relegation battlers this time. Even when winning last season, fans were dissatisfied – lower league

opposition, jacked-up ticket prices, and Basset's football seemed even duller than that employed by Frank Clark. The new players looked unsettled and the old ones looked fed up. In retrospect, it was part of a transitional process – after scraping together points to cling in the top three we timed our run-in to perfection and the new players (Rogers and Johnstone in particular) excelled.

But Forest are used to success, or at least the stability enjoyed by rivals Derby and Leicester. To get this, Basset has to buy wisely. The board have promised a paltry

£3 million, but in Van Hooijdonk we have a player worth considerably more gold, and the theory that he'll struggle to score in a struggling team certainly looks a reason to cash in. Harry was employed for his expertise at finding cheap signings from abroad and the lower leagues, but whether he can fill the holes in all departments remains to be seen. I suspect that because this time Forest expect a tough season, we'll have just enough of what it takes to hang around a little while longer.

NICK JAMES



THE REDS FILE

Manager: Dave Basset 8/10 – perfect job so far... now comes the test

Boardroom bigwig: Consortium leaders Phil Soar and Irving Scholier 6/10 – angered fans with inflated ticket prices, but at least they have ambition and understand how to operate as a big club

Player to watch: Alan Rogers – successfully filled Psycho's boots with defensive aggression and the keenness in attack that gives zealots a bad name

Player to get shot of: Scott Gemmill – Gerbil's a fair player who's lost consistency and attacking confidence. We'd rather have the money

Bad boy: Andy Johnston will embarrass our softies with his toughness

Style of play: Seem to be reverting to traditional Forest counter-attacking football

Best of enemies: The Foxes and The Rams. We're hoping their inferiority complex is soon restored

Terrace song: "Oh Nottingham is full of fun, football, fanny and Forest"

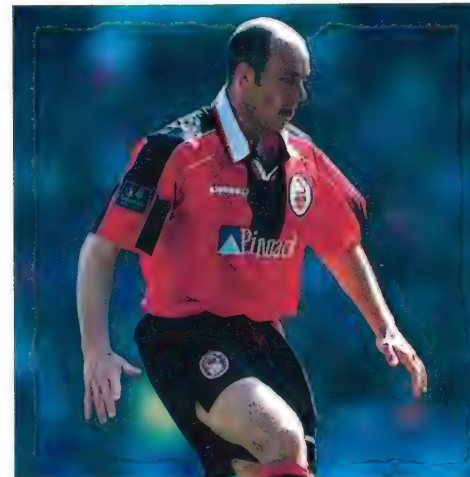
Best Web site: The best sites can be accessed through the rather good official site – <http://www.nottinghamforest.co.uk>

Strangest merchandise: A tatty signed photo (Boots lab job) of Colin Cooper with bleached hair

Top local boozer: For home fans Trent Bridge Inn, Radcliffe Road, for mixed fans Larwood and Voce by the neighbouring cricket ground

If only we still had: The midfield aggression, enthusiasm and creativity exemplified by Roy Keane (90-93) would help us out no end

If Forest were a drink they would be: We're still on the wagon after Cloughie's departure



DID YOU KNOW?

Only two goalkeepers have ever saved FA Cup Final penalties – and they were both playing for Forest last season (Beasant and Crossley)

Sheffield Wednesday

■ **Club colours:** Blue and white stripes with black shorts ■ **Nickname:** The Owls ■ **Club Captain:** Peter Atherton ■ **Sponsors:** Sanderson ■ **Last season** – League: 16th; FACup: 4th Round, Lge Cup: 2nd Round ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Paolo Di Canio

Fan's prediction 9th TF Prediction 18th Your Prediction Title odds 150/1

Big Ron didn't give a hoot

Let's get one thing clear. It was the right thing to do. Ron was not committed to Wednesday in a way which would secure our medium to long-term future. We had a very poor end to the season which saw the Owls plummet to just two places above the drop zone, and it's about time we got ourselves a good coach rather than just a good talker.

The thing is, we don't have a bad side now. With quality players like Rudi, Alexandersson, Di Canio, Carbone, Hinchcliffe (good enough to just miss Hoddle's

22 in France) and our version of Michael Owen, Francesco Sanetti, mixing with old fashioned grafters like Atherton, Newsome, Booth and Walker, we should start surprising people with more performances like the home games played against Man Utd and Newcastle last season.

The real positives to take away from a rather lacklustre-to-crap season are that what was starting to look like a hard-working, old-age team is turning into a youthful, flair-bursting, creative set-up. We've yet to see those changes produce better results, but I reckon this

season will show the rest of the Premiership that Wednesday can touch Europe. On a good day, with the wind behind us... just.

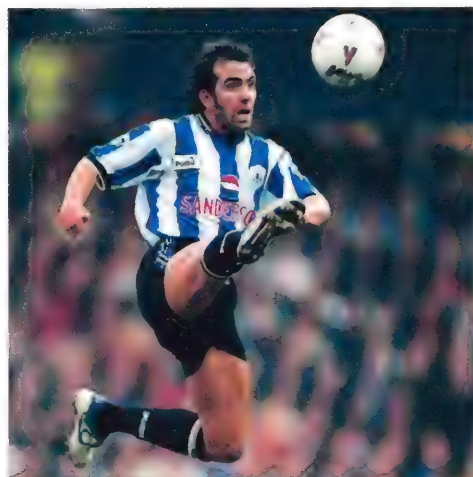
What do we need for that to happen? A coach who can nurture flair and combine it with good old-fashioned Yorkshire grit. A coach who can inject some confidence into a talented side. Let's hope whoever gets in the chair gives us some much needed guidance – they could turn this into the most enviable job in the country.

DAVID ROBERTS



DID YOU KNOW?

Sheffield Wednesday got their name from a mining team that played on a, wait for it, Wednesday afternoon, when the mines closed for the half day. And, they are called the Owls, because Hillsborough is near a place called Owlerton



THE OWLS FILE

Manager: As the magazine was going to press this position was still woefully unmanned

Boardroom bigwig: Dave Richards 9/10 – he cares passionately about Wednesday and is not scared of making potentially unpopular decisions for the long-term good of the club

Player to watch: Niclas Alexandersson – predominantly an attacking midfielder, but with the insight, vision and skills to play wherever his manager needs him. As incisive as Chris Waddle was at his prime on the wing, but with better finishing

Player to get shot of: Steve Nicol

Bad boy: Paolo Di Canio – he's not a dirty player, but he means a lot when things don't go his way. His passion is undeniable, but so is his collection of bookings

Style of play: Mixed bag of counter-attacking, long ball and continental passing. Usually a 3-5-2 formation

Best of enemies: The pigs – Sheffield United. Almost got

to play in the same division as them, but it was not to be

Terrace song: The Wednesday (and Official England) band now have a record out of Aida. "Na-na-na, na-na-na, na-na-na, Wednesday!"

Best Web site: http://www.yahoo.co.uk/teamtalk/sheff_wed

Strangest merchandise: Ozzie The Owl mug – when it's empty a blank thought bubble appears over Ozzie's head, but when you pour in your tea he fantasises about Wednesday doing the Treble

Top local boozer: Champs, Ecclesall Road

If only we still had: Dan Petrescu (94-95), he has turned out to be a much better player at Chelsea than he ever was at Wednesday

If The Owls were a drink they would be: Amaretto. Why? We've got Italian flavour, but I always have a bitter aftertaste in my mouth after we've played

Southampton

Club colours: Red and white stripes, black shorts ■ Nickname: The Saints ■ Club Captain: Jason Dodd ■ Sponsors: Sanderson ■ Last season – League: 12th, FACup: 3rd Round, Lge Cup: 4th Round ■ Player of the Season (1997/98): Paul Jones

Fan's prediction 8th TF Prediction 13th Your Prediction Title odds 100/1

Boss Jones is the true Saint

Last season was weird – there was none of the usual sweating over the final match of the season with ear glued to the scores on Radio 5, hoping that we wouldn't get relegated. Instead, we were at White Hart Lane, with Glenn Hoddle watching the midfield genius who would win us the World Cup – but while we were thrilling to the truly world class Le Tissier, Hoddle, incredibly, went for Anderton.

The season was not without its usual traumas and dark days of despair, however. We were bottom of the

League at the end of September and everyone's favourite for relegation, but by Christmas the great Dave Jones had the team smokin'. Talk of relegation involved other clubs and by Easter the main worry was whether or not we could sneak a place in Europe. This was largely achieved without the injured Le Tiss and the £7.5 million Boy Wonder Kevin Davies (who played only 20 full League games for us). One of the main reasons for the turnaround was the stability at the management level. Other crucial factors were Jones' signings – notably the excellent Carlton

Palmer and Paul Jones. The departure of Davies was a great shame – barring injury, he'll be a big star – but we are told that Dave Jones will be allowed to spend the £7.5 million on players and Saints fans trust his judgement.

The bad news is the apparent lack of progress regarding the new stadium, which effectively condemns us to 'small club' status for at least another two years, with around 10,000 Saints fans unable to get in to every home game and a two-year waiting list for season tickets.



THE SAINTS FILE

Manager: Dave Jones 9/10 – very astute signings, tactics and handling of players

Boardroom bigwig: Rupert Lowe 8/10 – the bloke has hardly put a foot wrong and he even managed to bring in Dave Jones

Player to watch: Matt Le Tissier – mainly to see how he will react to Hoddle's appalling decision to leave him out of the World Cup squad

Player to get shot of: Matthew Oakley

Bad boy: Francis Benali – a great exponent of the ball-plus-man school of tackling

Style of play: Rapid passing, particularly one-touch – Le Tiss as the playmaker and Palmer as the roving destroyer

Best of enemies: Portsmouth – it flatters the First Division no-hopers to call them rivals

Terrace song: When The Saints Go Marching In

Best Web site: <http://www.ecs.soton.ac.uk/saints/fanzine/ugly-inside.html>

Strangest merchandise: Three (count 'em) plastic Southampton coathangers for £3

Top local boozer: The one I mentioned last year was invaded by Coventry 'tough guys' picking fights with dads with their kids. So this year I recommend the Weston Arms, which is 20 yards from the ground, full of away fans and has shite beer, so drink there

If only we still had: Some bloke called Shearer (88-92) – he turned out to be quite good, apparently

If Southampton were a drink they would be: Skate Buster – a cocktail, red and white at the top with Pompey blue mixed with a shitty brown at the bottom



DID YOU KNOW?
If you drink 10 pints before kick-off and stare at The Dell's wonky Milton Road Stand you'll fall over

DID YOU KNOW?
When Chelsea's sixth went past Ian Walker last season, Spurs' Dean Austin was seen laughing behind the Tottenham dug-out

Tottenham Hotspur

Club colours: White and navy blue ■ Nickname: Spurs ■ Club Captain: Sol Campbell ■ Sponsors: Hewlett Packard ■ Last season – League: 14th, FACup: 4th Round, Lge Cup: 3rd Round ■ Player of the Season (1997/98): David Ginola

Fan's prediction 13th TF Prediction 15th Your Prediction Title odds 50/1

Another Gross year ahead

The most worrying outcome of last season's debacle was the sympathy I developed for Manchester City. Those poor Blues, once better than their arrogant rivals, are now beyond a laughing stock. An amusing scenario, except when you start thinking what you'd do if it were your team. I stopped laughing, and started praying. Success at Arsenal did not help of course, though it was encouraging to note that it didn't change their fans. Once a smug bastard and all that...

No matter where you stand on the 'Christian Gross is rubbish' debate, the 'what the hell is Alan Sugar playing at?' question, 'the Jurgen Klinsmann is a Beetle-driving mercenary' forum and the 'Frode Grodas (why?)' dispute, you'll agree that last season was embarrassing. Hideously so. The only consolation was that Spurs were slightly more clueless off the pitch than on it. Transition, I think they call it, and that'll be the sixth transitional year on the trot.

I remember when Spurs had a 14-year-old called Quentin Fortune on their books, a future star apparently.

Well, he left, Dean Austin came, and Fortune has just been to the World Cup with South Africa. Perhaps Spurs' most important signing last year (which happens to be an old blotchy one really) was David Pleat, who has a job on his hands – to rid the club of deadwood. Lose the average players, Dave, sort out the youth policy, instill a Premiership infra-structure, learn to pronounce players' names and we could be going places. Not next season, though. I fancy that could be one of transition.



BEN LYTTLETON

THE SPURS FILE

Manager: Christian Gross 5/10 – was in a no-win situation last season, and he lost, but he needs to turn things round this year

Boardroom bigwig: Alan Sugar 8/10 – has learnt finally that clean sheets are as important as balance sheets and has shown us the money

Player to watch: Moussa Saib – match-winning Algerian playmaker. Has shades of Nayim, and hence cult potential

Player to get shot of: Dean Austin and Frode Grodas, and Ramon Vega. And then there's Justin Edinburgh and John Scales. Not forgetting Andy Sinton

Bad boy: Ramon Vega. We would rather have Vincent in the side, and would positively welcome Suzanne

Style of play: Fancy and over-intricate in own half. Poor in opposition half

Best of enemies: Arsenal, local rivals who happen to be rather good. Hatred is now tinged with envy

Terrace song: What's to sing about?

Best Web site: <http://www.spurs.co.uk>

Strangest merchandise: Do goals count? Oh, if only they could be bought...

Top local boozer: Milford Tavern, down the road from the East Stand entrance

If only we still had: Danny Blanchflower (54-64) – the last man to lead us to the Double. So few of the current crop have any pride in their shirt

If Spurs were a drink what would they be: The Strutting Cock – intoxicating individual ingredients from all over the world, which, when mixed up, render drinker loose at the back and liable to fall over at any time



West Ham

■ **Club colours:** Claret, light blue and white ■ **Nickname:** The Irons or The Hammers ■ **Club Captain:** Julian Dicks ■ **Sponsors:** Yeah, right ■ **Last season - League:** 8th; **FA Cup:** 6th Round, **Lge Cup:** 5th Round ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Rio Ferdinand

Fan's prediction 6th TF Prediction 9th Your Prediction Title odds 50/1

A French revolution in E13?

What with last season being our best since the Premiership started, expectations are bound to be high at the Boleyn for the coming season. And so they should be, considering the season ticket price rises, but the truth is next year The Irons could go one of two ways. Onwards and upwards or we could fade and die.

As I write, Harry Redknapp is scouting about for new defenders and things look ominous for Dicksy and Richard Hall. What a tragedy - there's so much talent there. Harry

himself is doing a great job in getting the young squad we now have to commit themselves to long-term deals, and surely with the likes of Rio, Frankie Lamp, the mighty Hartson and Lomas all staying together things can only get better.

On the signings front, Harry appears to be favouring the French connection. Marc Keller is already there and, like all of us, Harry's keen to keep Bernard Lama in the squad, too. Harry has also been chasing Auxerre's Sylvestre - quite why he wants to play a cat in the team,

nobody knows, but he probably has his reasons. And of course, we are bound to have some Rob Lee rumours at some stage, just for a change.

It will be hard to recreate last year's success, but the players are more than capable - and who would bet against an England call up for Rio, Frank and Sinclair this season? As for the team as a whole, well, Europe's not out of the question, but we really need to improve our away form first.

SCOTT GAMBIR



THE IRONS FILE

Manager: Harry Redknapp 7/10 - top man, but possibly to blame for dismal away form last year. Redeems himself by signing the likes of Lama

Boardroom bigwig: Peter Storrie 7/10 - decent enough, tries hard and is good at communicating with the fans, but he needs to get the West Stand sorted

Player to watch: Rio Ferdinand - young, strong, quick England international - what more could one want? In his own words "who da man?"

Player to get shot of: Breacker, Impey or Ludo

Bad boy: David Unsworth - an aggressive Fred Flintstone in a West Ham shirt

Style of play: Home last season: absolutely brilliant.

Away last season: absolutely shite

Best of enemies: Chelsea - well, it's Chelsea, innit? Showbiz club and all that tosh

Terrace song: I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles

Best Web site:

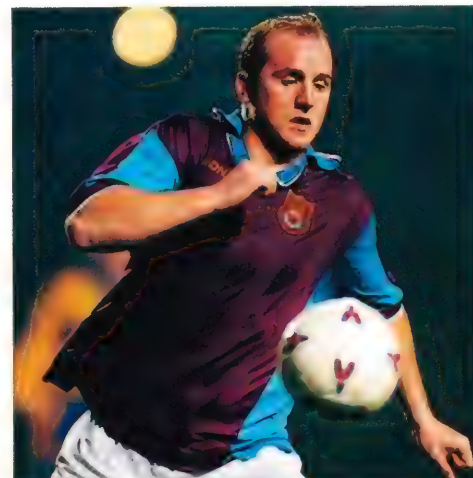
<http://www.ironworks.com/westham/westham.htm>

Strangest merchandise: We had Paulo Futre watches once - two weeks later he retired. 'Nuff said.

Top local boozier: The Boleyn, Green St

If only we still had: Bobby Moore (58-74) - before my time, but apparently he was a bit good

If West Ham were a drink they would be: A typical London bitter - fine if you're in the capital, but terrible when it goes out to the provinces



DID YOU KNOW?
Upton Park is actually built on an old cabbage patch from donkeys years ago - we still get cabbages coming through

Wimbledon

■ **Club colours:** Navy blue with yellow trim ■ **Nickname:** The Dons ■ **Club Captain:** Robbie Earle ■ **Sponsors:** Elonex Computers ■ **Last season - League:** 15th; **FA Cup:** 5th round, **Lge Cup:** 3rd Round ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Michael Hughes

Fan's prediction 17th TF Prediction 10th Your Prediction Title odds 150/1

We shall not be moved

Forget the fact that we looked a very average side by the end of last season. Forget the fact that even clubs like Southampton and Coventry are spending £3-4 million on players which will mean we really have a fight on our hands to stay in the Premiership this season. What Wimbledon fans care about most is the fact that Sam Hammam and the club's anonymous Norwegian owners seem quite happy to say 'stuff you' to the club's supporters (supporters who have not only put up with ground-sharing at the most

inconvenient stadium in London for the past eight years, but have also gone there in steadily increasing numbers) and uproot to Dublin, Hull, Gatwick or wherever. Wherever the money is, basically. To take Wimbledon FC from the vicinity of South London would amount to nothing more than theft. And to all those supporters who taunt us by saying they'd love an away trip to Dublin, just wait until the day some conscience-less corporation staffed with faceless money grubbers takes over your club and tries to steal it from you.

So frankly, I don't care if we lose every game this season 10-0. I don't care if we sell all our best players to Crystal Palace for peanuts. I don't care if we get knocked out of the FA Cup by Rochdale in an embarrassing display. What I care about is seeing my team play a 'home' game again. In 1889 - long before Sam Hammam was born or Sky TV was conceived - Wimbledon Football Club was founded in the London Borough of Merton, and that's where we belong.

JIM DREWETT



DID YOU KNOW?
Wimbledon record goalscorer Alan Cork is the only player in the history of League Football to have scored in every division, including the Premiership



THE DONS FILE

Manager: Joe Kinnear 5/10 - ten out of ten for what he's achieved as manager over the last seven years, but 0 out of 10 for constantly slagging the fans and supporting the Dublin Dons outrage

Boardroom bigwig: Sam Hammam 5/10 - like Kinnear, Sam gets maximum respect for all he has done for The Dons. But to think he has the right to steal our club from us and stick it across the Irish Sea, ludicrously claiming we are not true supporters if we don't go with him - well, he can burn in hell!

Player to watch: Chris Perry - if there is a better defender in the Premier League then I've yet to see him

Player to get shot of: Alan Reeves

Bad boy: Ben Thatcher - just can't stop himself from kicking people for no reason

Style of play: Worse than watching paint dry by the end of last season, but Mark Kennedy and a host of star signings will surely change that (please God!)

Best of enemies: Palace are too much of a joke, it's Chelsea we really hate

Terrace song: We'll never go to Dublin

Best Web site: <http://www.netkonec.co.uk/b/brenford/wimbledon/>

Strangest merchandise: Programmes listing 'home' games

Top local boozier: Our 'local' is 12 miles away!

If only we still had: Plough Lane (12-90) - soon to be demolished and turned into a new Safeways supermarket. How badly we need another one of those!

If Wimbledon were a drink they would be: One For The Road - a quick shot of something strong, then home

SCOTTISH Premiership

Aberdeen

■ **Club colours:** All Red ■ **Nickname:** The Dons ■ **Club Captain:** Jim Leighton ■ **Sponsors:** Living Design ■ **Last season – League:** 6th; Scottish Cup: 3rd round; League Cup: Semi-final ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Billy Dodds

Fan's prediction 3rd TF Prediction 6th Your Prediction Title odds 25/1

The fighting fortress

When the Dons got rid of Roy Aitken last season the fans were jubilant. At last here was a chance to capitalise on a squad of quality players who just weren't doing the business. Unfortunately the board decided to opt for Mr Flamboyance himself, Alex Miller. This man could make a three-toed sloth seem exciting.

Still, he did manage to tighten up the defence by bringing in Derek Whyte from Middlesbrough. Once again reverberations of 'Fortress Pittodrie' echoed around the ground. Problem was, this fortress sometimes forgot to pull up the drawbridge, but never mind. A lack of cash is likely to stifle any great influx of new blood, but a new season equals new hope. Eek.



THE DONS FILE

Manager: Alex Miller 4/10 – the most exciting manager on the planet.

Boardroom bigwig: Stewart Milne 11/10 – consistently defended professional scapegoat Roy Aitken while managing to keep a straight face.

Player to watch: Eoin Jess – his psychological problem is improving along with his play.

Player to get shot of: Ilian Kiriakov – the spitting Bulgar.

Bad boy: Dean Windass – managed to pick up two red cards in one game last season.

Style of play: Pretentiously grandiose starters with little substance, character or bottle.

Best of enemies: Rangers, though the feeling isn't reciprocated. Rangers fans don't care enough about whinging Aberdonians.

Best web site: www.afc.co.uk/site/

If only we still had: Alex Ferguson – the last manager we achieved true glory with.

If Aberdeen were a drink they would be: A Bloody Mary – where the Mary is pronounced like 'awful'.

Celtic

■ **Club colours:** Green and White Hoops ■ **Nickname:** The Bhoys ■ **Club Captain:** Tom Boyd ■ **Sponsors:** Umbro ■ **Last season – League:** 1st; Scottish Cup: semi-final; League Cup: Winners ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Craig Burley

Fan's prediction 1st TF Prediction 2nd Your Prediction Title odds 6/5/1

Bhoys from the backstab

At Celtic Park the job of manager carries all the permanence associated with being a wife of Henry the Eighth. Despite the setback of losing Jorge Cadete and Paulo Di Cannio, Wim Jansen still managed to build a team in one season which nearly did the treble and nearly turned over Liverpool in the UEFA Cup.

Despite breaking the tedious domestic dominance of Rangers and clearly having the ability to shape Celtic into a European force, Jansen was acrimoniously shown the door by the board. Jock Brown, Celtic's general manager, couldn't even bring himself to shake hands with Jansen after Celtic won the title. Most of the players are privately peeved at the club's actions and it doesn't bode well for another championship-winning success.



THE BHOYS FILE

Manager: Up for grabs. (Was Wim Jansen 10/10). The board seem to think that a manager is peripheral to the general plot.

Boardroom bigwig: Fergus McCann 4/10. Blotted his copy book with his treatment of Wim Jansen.

Player to watch: Henrik Larsson. Vast contribution toward Celtic's title aspirations. Clever, skilful Swede.

Player to get shot of: Harald Brattbakk. Looks and plays like a building society manager.

Bad boy: Tosh McKinlay – he sank the heid in the Swede.

Style of play: Fortress-like defence, creative midfield, insipid attack.

Best of enemies: Glasgow Rangers (The Huns). Spewing hordes of sectarian hatred.

Best web site: www.celticfc.co.uk/body.html

If only we still had: Paulo Di Cannio, Jorge Cadete, Wim Jansen, (sniff sniff).

If Celtic were a drink they would be: Agostino Bitters – rancid taste and hard to swallow.

Dundee

■ **Club colours:** Blue and White ■ **Nickname:** The Dark Blues ■ **Club Captain:** Barry Smith ■ **Sponsors:** The Firkin Brewery ■ **Last season –** League: 1st (1st Division – promoted to Premier); Scottish Cup: Qtr Final; League Cup: 3rd Round ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Barry Smith

Fan's prediction 9th TF Prediction 6th Your Prediction Title odds 100/1

The icing on the cake

After a top performance reminiscent of Saint Johnstone two seasons ago, Dundee ran away with the First Division and ensured their promotion with over a month to go. Most teams who come up go straight back down, but we take heart from St. Johnstone's record last season where not only did they stay up but they almost qualified for a European place as well.

The extra revenue from the visits of the likes of the Huns and the Tims will suit us fine and provided that we play as well as we know we can, then survival is a certainty. After that, who knows? At last now everyone knows that the sleeping giant in Dundee play in blue, not tangerine.



THE DARK BLUES FILE

Manager: Jocky Scott. 7/10. A face that fits with the aspirations of the board. Didn't assemble the promotion-winning squad although he did steer them towards the big time.

Boardroom bigwig: Geoffrey Brown 4/10 – the unacceptable face of football corporatism.

Player to watch: Iain Anderson. Undoubted talent in the shape of a possible Neil McCann or Billy Dodds.

Player to get shot of: Darren Magee. Isn't even of a high enough quality for the Scottish First Division.

Bad boy: Jerry O'Driscoll. He ate all the pies.

Style of play:

Best of enemies: Dundee United

Best web site: <http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/2914/index.html>

If only we still had: Billy Dodds. He never looked happier than when he was with Dundee.

If Dundee were a drink they would be: Milk and pure meths – highly spirited and enough to make you go blind.

Dundee United

■ **Club colours:** Tangerine and Black ■ **Nickname:** The Terrors ■ **Club Captain:** David Bowman ■ **Sponsors:** Telewest Communications ■ **Last season –** League: 7th; Scottish Cup: Qtr Final; League Cup: Beaten finalists ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Kjell Olofsson

Fan's prediction 8th TF Prediction 7th Your Prediction Title odds 25/1

United we fall

This season looks as if it's going to be punctuated with demonstrations by the fans against the terror that is those fearsome McLean brothers. It would be hard to remember a campaign in which United were so poor and that includes the dark times of three seasons ago when they were relegated.

Too many players looked as if they would rather be anywhere other than playing at Tannadice. Lack of cash and lack of ambition could see them dragged into the relegation dogfight yet again. The crowd held up reasonably well last season considering the poor fare on the park, but the ultimate indignity could yet come if Dundee are allowed to share our ground with us.



THE TERRORS FILE

Manager: Tommy McLean. 4/10. No longer considered a tactical genius 'cos he never was one.

Boardroom bigwig: Jim McLean. 4/10. Almost as pleasant as his gerbil-faced, managing brother.

Player to watch: Steven Pressley. Is he going to get a haircut and a shave or is he going to stay a dirty hippy?

Player to get shot of: Robbie Winters. The lad just doesn't seem to care since he was linked with Celtic.

Bad boy: Maurice Malpas. As he gets older and slower he makes up for it in other ways.

Style of play: Fast break counter-attacking. They've been

found out though, so now they're mostly dull and listless.

Best of enemies: Dundee. Can smell their ground 'cos it's a big dustbin and it's less than 100 yards away.

Best web site: www.geocities.com/Colosseum/3504/dufc.html

If only we still had: Paul Sturrock, then we might have a bit of flair in the team.

If Dundee United were a drink they would be: Tango – after you've watched them for a full ninety minutes it feels like a big orange bloke has slapped you in the face.

Dunfermline

■ **Club colours:** Black and White stripes ■ **Nickname:** The Pars ■ **Club Captain:** Craig Robertson ■ **Sponsors:** Landmark Home Furnishing ■ **Last season –** League: 8th; Scottish Cup: 4th Round; League Cup: semi-final ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Andy Smith

Fan's prediction 6th TF Prediction 9th Your Prediction Title odds 25/1

Loyal Smith leads Paton back

Quite a few clubs were chasing after Andy Smith in the close season. Thanks to the loyalty of the big man it looks as if he's staying put for the time being, although the club could probably do with the money from his sale. Still, the return of an injury-free Gerry Britton partnering the untiring Smith could see the team bang in as many goals as they did two seasons ago.

Bert Paton got shot of a load of the old lags a few weeks before the end of last season. The Pars managed to stay up and extracted revenge on Celtic by forcing them to take their title aspirations to the last game. There was nothing funnier than watching the 'Weegies' leave East End Park disappointed.



THE PARS FILE

Manager: Bert Paton. 8/10. Mad, well-meaning guy who looks even more gormless without the hat.

Boardroom bigwig: C. Roy Woodrow. 6/10. Is starting to get the work done on the new terracing.

Player to watch: Andy Smith. Highest scoring native player. Likes to score with his ears.

Player to get shot of: Hamish French. The brain's still there but the legs aren't.

Bad boy: If you want to rough it up with the Pars, consider them all bad boys.

Style of play: Route one football, hoping to capitalise on

the height of the bustling Andy Smith.

Best of enemies: Celtic.

Best web site: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/sblance/>

If only we still had: Jackie McNamara, but he sold out and went to Celtic (unfortunately).

If Dunfermline were a drink they would be: A bottle of buckfast – cheap and nasty with a kick like a mule.

Heart of Midlothian

■ **Club colours:** White and Maroon ■ **Nickname:** The Jambos ■ **Club Captain:** Gary Locke ■ **Sponsors:** Strongbow ■ **Last season – League:** 3rd; Scottish Cup: Winners; League Cup: Qtr-final ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Gary Naysmith

Fan's prediction 1st TF Prediction 3rd Your Prediction Title odds 25/1

Hearts of gold

Roll on the new season. There's no doubt that the confidence of the team will be on a different plane after last season's performance. Beating Rangers in the final of the Scottish Cup proved that we're good enough to challenge the Old Firm on any stage.

The encouraging thing about the team is that they're all very young and fear nobody. Of all the Scottish teams they played the most consistently exciting football even when the results didn't go the way they should have. Anyone who dares to question Heart's title-challenging credentials need only look as far as last season to see they're as real as Jim Jefferies' bad back. The Jambos are on a roll.



THE JAMBOS FILE

Manager: Jim Jefferies. 10/10. Voted manager of the season. Showed what can be done with fifty pence and four fruit salads to spend.
Boardroom bigwig: Christopher Robinson. 9/10. Hearts fan through and through.
Player to watch: Neil McCann. The poor man's Ryan Giggs is aiming to get richer.
Player to get shot of: Dave MacPherson. The galloping Dave's getting a bit long in the tooth now.
Bad boy: Stefano Salvatori. Serie A dirty tricks go down a swiz in the Scottish Premier.

Style of play: Fast pacy passing game which can be excitingly entertaining to watch.
Best of enemies: Hibernian – the First Division side in Edinburgh. Ho Ho.
Best web site: www.heartsfc.co.uk/
If only we still had: A trophy to win, but we won it last season. Now for the league.
If Hearts were a drink they would be: Strongbow cider – hits the mark every time.

Kilmarnock

■ **Club colours:** Blue and White stripes ■ **Nickname:** Killie ■ **Club Captain:** Ray Montgomerie ■ **Sponsors:** Sports Division ■ **Last season – League:** 4th; Scottish Cup: 4th round; League Cup: 3rd round ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Gary Holt

Fan's prediction 3rd TF Prediction 4th Your Prediction Title odds 25/1

Killie fields new star

Premier League upstarts we well may be, but it's starting to sink in with the opposition and the media alike that Kilmarnock are a team to be fearful of. Not only that – they play attractive and highly effective football. The jury's out on the signing of Rangers' career substitute Ian Durrant but if he does the biz he'll quickly be forgiven for his questionable past.

Another favourable signing is Killie fan Alan Mahood from Greenock Morton. He stuck two past us in our cup-winning run two seasons ago, so we know what he can do. Another shot at European football could exorcise the ghost of AGC Nice – the second-rate French team we managed to make look good last time around.



THE KILLIE FILE

Manager: Bobby Williamson. 9/10. The caretaker who became the soul maker of the team and the club.
Boardroom bigwig: Bill Costley. 7/10. Hasn't put a corporate foot wrong so far, but we're still waiting.
Player to watch: Mark Roberts. Has the passing precision of a socially challenged David Beckham.
Player to get shot of: Already got shot of Derek Anderson to Ayr United.
Bad boy: Paul Wright – but only when he doesn't score.
Style of play: Pacy wing play, highly creative and entertaining to watch.

Best of enemies: Ayr United (They've won sod all and never will).
Best web site: www.kilmarnockfc.co.uk
If only we still had: Mark Reilly, but Tommy Burns stole him and took him to footballing giants Reading?
If Killie were a drink they would be: Glemorangie – a cultured blend of the finest malt whiskies.

Motherwell

■ **Club colours:** Mustard and Maroon ■ **Nickname:** The Well ■ **Club Captain:** Brian Martin ■ **Sponsors:** Motorola ■ **Last season – League:** 9th; Scottish Cup: 4th round; League Cup: Qtr-final ■ **Player of the Season (1997/98):** Tommy Coyne

Fan's prediction 7th TF Prediction 8th Your Prediction Title odds 25/1

Well still ill

Getting rid of Alex McLeish, our dour taciturn ex-manager who managed to turn an exciting team into a bunch of duffers, was the highlight of an otherwise tawdry season. For some reason we always seem to humble the Old Firm and then get spanked by the likes of Saint Johnstone and Dunfermline.

The acid test for the new manager starts now. Brian Martin has already criticised him publicly for his lack of tactical nous, but hopefully this fallout will be swept under the carpet and forgotten about. Premier survival with the ghost of a chance of a good cup run seems to be all we can look forward to. All of which seems pretty depressing really.



THE WELL FILE

Manager: Harri Kampmann. 5/10. Famous Finnish nobody who took the job even Alex McLeish didn't want.
Boardroom bigwig: John Chapman. 5/10. But where's the money going to come from?
Player to watch: Tommy Coyne – now that he's nearing his 95th birthday, can he make it through a whole match without resorting to his zimmer frame?
Player to get shot of: Take your pick from the rest of the squad apart from maybe Owen Coyle.
Bad boy: They're all bad. Not so sure about the boy bit though.

Style of play: Suffocate and stifle the opposition. Not the most spectator-friendly team to watch.
Best of enemies: Hamilton Academicals – and the rumours that they might be ground sharing with us is hard to take.
Best web site: www.isfa.co.uk
If only we still had: An exciting team chasing for honours instead of a bunch of relegation strugglers.
If Motherwell were a drink they would be: Flat Coke. No bubbles, no sparkle, no anything.

Fan's prediction 1st TF Prediction 1st Your Prediction Title odds 4/6

Rangers go Dutch

Losing the title to Celtic was a bitter pill to swallow. They were playing the most sterile football we've seen in years yet we still managed to lose the title to them. That's how bad it really was. The state of play must be seriously addressed to reverse our fortunes.

A new philosophy and a new disciplined regime is promised with the appointment of Dick Advocaat - the new manager. His general strategy and tactical genius with PSV Eindhoven should see us perform on the European stage and make up for previous disappointments. His arrival heralds a new era for the club with so many seasoned campaigners leaving and so much new blood coming in. Look out Celtic and remember - you didn't win the title, we lost it.



THE BEARS FILE

Manager: Dick Advocaat. Untested. Sounds like a venereal disease but he did the trick with PSV Eindhoven.
Boardroom bigwig: David Murray. 8/10. The name should be changed by deed poll to David Money.
Player to watch: Amoroso Lorenzo - if only to see how long it takes for him to get booked or sent off.
Player to get shot of: We got shot of half the squad in the closed season.
Bad boy: Ian Ferguson - affectionately known as 'The Thug'.

Style of play: Take what the opposition can throw at you, counter attack and if you don't manage to score rely on a 'wee hand' from the ref.
Best of enemies: Glasgow Celtic.
Best web site: <http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~andy.gray/index.html>
If only we still had: Paul Gascoigne, Brian Laudrup, Super Ali - boo hoo.
If Rangers were a drink they would be: Orange Stripe - overpriced imported piss.

Saint Johnstone

■ Club colours: Blue and White stripes ■ Nickname: The Saints ■ Club Captain: Jim Weir ■ Sponsors: The Famous Grouse ■ Last season - League: 5th; Scottish Cup: Qtr-final; League Cup: 3rd round ■ Player of the Season (1997/98): Alan Main (Jesus)

Fan's prediction 4th TF Prediction 5th Your Prediction Title odds 25/1

Solid, reliable and... boring

Newly promoted last season, everybody wrote us off as the team for the drop. We rubbed their noses in it. No team who played the Saints in last season's campaign remained unscathed. True, we don't play the most exciting football in the world, but neither do the Italians. Like them, we're solid at the back, nearly impossible to score against, and if we score against you, you've had it.

The one thing we lack is a clinical finisher. Georgio Boyle is okay and Roddy Grant tries hard, but we don't create too many chances so we need to take them when we do. Sturrock should drill this into the team. If he does, look out Scotland, the Saintees are in town.



THE SAINTS FILE

Manager: Paul Sturrock. 9/10. The man could make a nuclear plant from cereal packets and sticky back plastic.
Boardroom bigwig: Geoffrey Brown. 9/10. Doesn't get in the way of Sturrock, which suits the fans fine.
Player to watch: Alan Main. We don't call this man Jesus for no reason.
Player to get shot of: George O'Boyle - tends to miss as many sitters as he scores.
Bad boy: Atilla Sekerlioglu. As subtle in the tackle as his name suggests. Opposition teams will be glad to know that he's going home.

Style of play: Well organised, journeyman team. Very hard to break down. Can be dull at times.
Best of enemies: Either of the teams from Dundee 'cos they're both supported by Dundonians. Urgh.
Best web site: <http://www.grange.demon.co.uk/saints/sjfc.htm>
If only we still had: A crowd in four figures to stop away fans singing "What a shi**y home support".
If Saint Johnstone were a drink they would be: Tap water - flavourless, bland and characterless but capable of sustaining life as we know it, Jim.

Total Football's Crystal Balls

After many hours studying the evidence, *Total Football* has come to the firm conclusion that the Premiership is heading back to Highbury in 1999...

ARSENAL - CHAMPIONS

It's got to be Arsenal's title again. The way in which Arsène Wenger's side stuffed United in the run-in last spring suggests they have the power to dominate English football for at least a season to come.

MAN UTD - 2ND

Alex Ferguson has moved to strengthen his squad, especially his ageing defence with the signing of Jaap Stam - but we reckon United will finish second best again.

LEEDS - 3RD

George Graham confounded his critics last season by turning his dour Leeds side into an outfit worth watching. Their fifth-place finish showed Mr Bung is back to his best as a boss, and they can improve again this year.

CHELSEA - 4TH

Under Luca Viali, Chelsea look like they're bursting with ambition. The Pensioners were linked with every big-name transfer target during the close-season, and with two pots already on the mantelpiece from last season, they can confirm their place among the elite.

LIVERPOOL - 5TH

Liverpool had another below-par season in 97/98, and there's no evidence to suggest they can do any better this time around. In fact, we see them tumbling even lower than last time landing the fifth spot. When are they going to wake up at Anfield and be Liverpool again?

ASTON VILLA - 6TH

John Gregory worked wonders to get Aston Villa moving in the right direction after Brian Little went. They've got the players to be a top-six team this time around.

BLACKBURN - 7TH

Blackburn had a rum old season under Roy Hodgson. They had arguably the best striking partnership in Gallacher and Sutton, but a woeful finish saw them on the slide to seventh place. Their squad looks on the thin side, so seventh would be a fair show again.

COVENTRY - 8TH

Gordon Strachan's Coventry were one of the surprises of last year. The goals of Huckerby and Dublin meant they sat

out the usual relegation quickstep, and we think they can do even better. Look out for the Sky Blues pushing for a UEFA spot next spring.

WEST HAM - 9TH

West Ham surely went as far as they're capable of going last season, when on the crest of Ginger Hartson's scoring wave, they reached eighth spot. Good old Harry Redknapp is a shrewder fella than his cheezy-chirpy Cockney front suggests, and he will make sure they don't slip too far. It's ninth place for The Irons.

NEWCASTLE - 10TH

Newcastle can't be as bad this season as last. They just can't. It would be an act of unnatural cruelty to the long-suffering Geordies if they were. The key is Shearer. Fit, he's going to get them 20 goals minimum - more than enough to guarantee mid-table anonymity, and a 10th-place finish.

DERBY COUNTY - 11TH

Derby are one of those clubs no-one has a bad word for - and we're no exception. Affable Jim Smith has recruited a happy band of gifted mercenaries at Pride Park, and their rise to ninth place last season was one of the stories of the campaign. They'll slip this season, but not far. Down to 11th for The Rams.

LEICESTER - 12TH

It looks like we're lumbered with Leicester for a little while yet. One of England's yo-yo clubs has turned into a yo club. Martin O'Neill has created a team capable of stealing enough points over a season to survive for the foreseeable future. It's 12th place for The Foxes this time around.

SOUTHAMPTON - 13TH

Southampton were many people's favourites to go down last season (including ours). But some shrewd signings by Dave Jones helped The Saints reach the top dozen. We can see them slipping just a place this time. They'll miss Kevin Davies's goals.

MIDDLESBROUGH - 14TH

Middlesbrough are now a wiser side than the one relegated to the First Division two seasons ago, and should be able to consolidate their place in the top flight. Steve Gibson's cash

AND THE REST...

So, that's the premiership sorted, but what about the rest? *Total Football* polishes its crystal ball to predict the outcome of the Nationwide Leagues...

Division One

1	Sunderland
2	Bolton
3	Ipswich
4	Crystal Palace
5	Barnsley
6	Sheff Utd
7	Wolves
8	Birmingham
9	Watford
10	Norwich
11	Bristol City
12	Huddersfield
13	West Brom
14	Stockport
15	Portsmouth
16	Bradford
17	Crewe
18	Grimsby
19	Tranmere
20	Oxford
21	QPR
22	Swindon
23	Port Vale
24	Bury

1	Stoke City
2	Fulham
3	Manchester City
4	Notts County
5	Bristol Rovers
6	Northampton
7	Wrexham
8	Reading
9	Chesterfield
10	Macclesfield
11	Blackpool
12	Gillingham
13	Burnley
14	Wigan
15	Bournemouth
16	Preston
17	Oldham
18	Millwall
19	York
20	Luton
21	Walsall
22	Lincoln
23	Colchester
24	Wycombe

and ambition has turned them into big hitters in the transfer market, and their squad is strong enough to see them to a respectable 14th position. The presence of Gazza provides yet another fascinating sub-plot down by The Riverside.

TOTTENHAM - 15TH

Tottenham can only continue to struggle. They've lost Klinsmann's talismanic presence as well as Gary Mabbutt's level head behind the scenes, and the outlook is bleak for Spurs fans. Another season of woe beckons, and 15th is the best they can hope for.

EVERTON - 16TH

Once a big club, Everton are now the Premiership's new Coventry City. Every season they threaten to do everyone a favour by getting themselves relegated, but in one bound they manage to escape. They'll do the same come May again, with a spawny 16th-place effort.

NOTTS FOREST - 17TH

It gives us enormous pleasure to predict survival for Nottingham Forest. First, because they used to be brilliant, and it's a shame to see a famous name fall on hard times. Second, it nails the hoary old cliché that promoted sides are doomed to relegation. Enough of your unbridgeable

chasms. The Tricky Trees will stay in the top flight - even if they do it on the last day via goal difference.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY - 18TH

Sheffield Wednesday caught our eye as relegation fodder. They ended the season in atrocious form, sacked their second manager in a matter of months, and generally gave the impression of a rudderless ship, taking in water at an advanced rate, with a rather large iceberg on the horizon. It's 18th place and a big bye-bye to the stuffed Owls.

WIMBLEDON - 19TH

It's finally time to bid farewell to Wimbledon. For 12 years they've delighted us with their crazy antics. How we've revelled in their us-against-the-world mentality. We've sympathised with their poor-boys persecution complex. But, sadly, the novelty has worn off now. They looked a tired outfit towards the end of last season, and the game is up. You're going down this time.

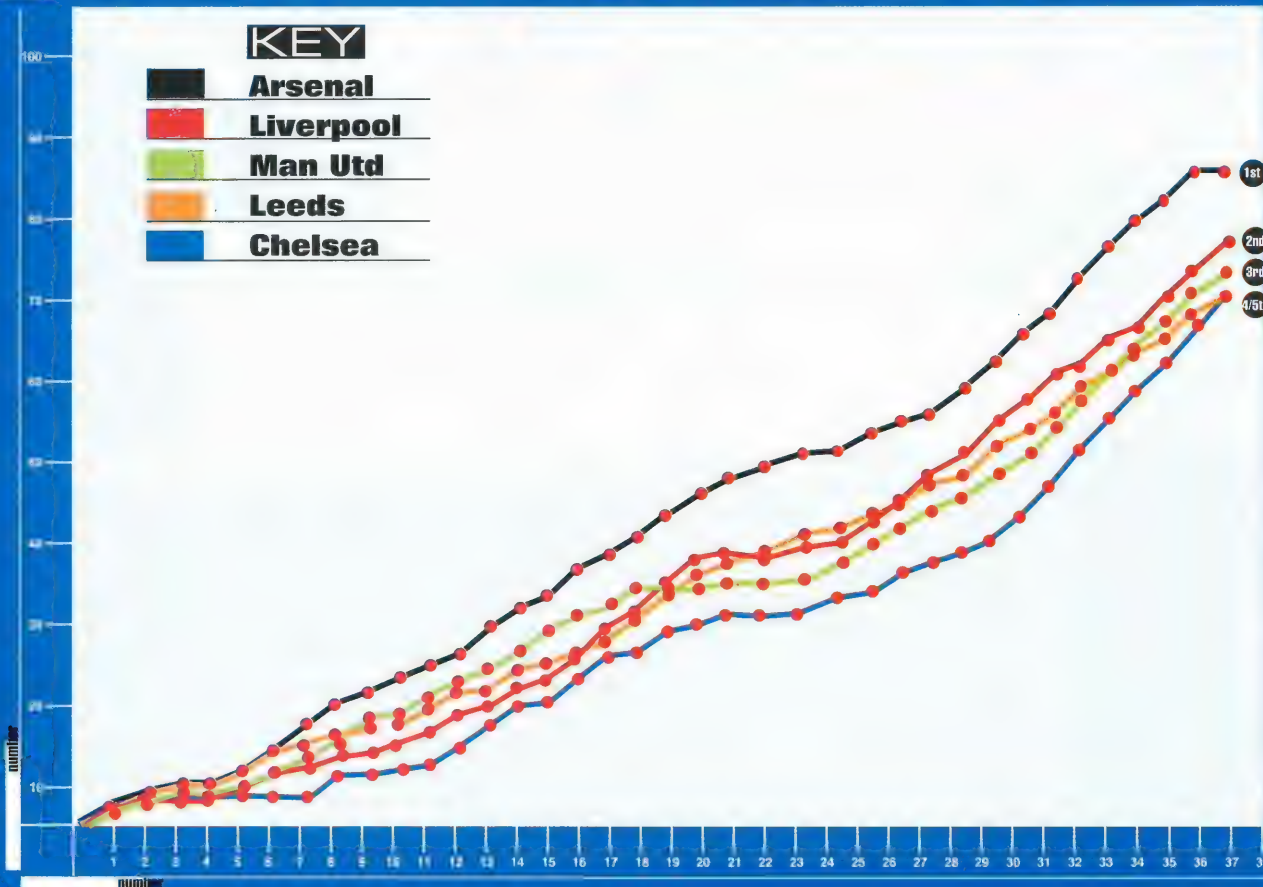
CHARLTON - 20TH

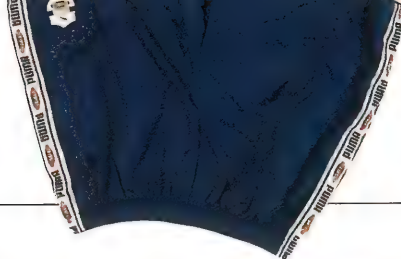
Charlton Athletic can complete a South London double by heading back from whence they came. Indeed, they could be the first side to be relegated before Bonfire Night.

1	Brentford
2	Plymouth
3	Barnet
4	Peterborough
5	Halifax
6	Torquay
7	Rotherham
8	Leyton Orient
9	Carlisle
10	Scunthorpe
11	Southend
12	Scarborough
13	Chester
14	Mansfield
15	Shrewsbury
16	Cardiff
17	Cambridge
18	Exeter
19	Swansea
20	Rochdale
21	Hull
22	Darlington
23	Hartlepool
24	Brighton

VIRTUAL CHAMPIONS

So you've seen what world esteemed football mag *Total Football* reckons will happen in next year's Premiership. To see how accurate they were we fed all the latest statistics into EA's *FIFA: Road To World Cup* (which features a full roster of Premiership teams) and sat back as the computerised teams fought one another for Premiership glory. Looking at these results it seems that we're in for one hell of a season. Doubtless we'll be back next season to assess the performances of both the teams in question and EA's football engine.





[KIT

STUFF, GEAR, GUBBINS, EPHEMERA... FOR THIS SPECIAL WE RANG UP ALL THE SPORTS CLOTHING MANUFACTURERS, AND THIS IS THE BEST OF THE GEAR THAT WE GOT IN THE POST. COMFY, TOO...



REEBOK SHORTS



ARSENAL AWAY



BETTER REEBOK TOP

DODGY REEBOK TOP



Official UK PlayStation Football Special



TROUSERS



**SMART REVERSIBLE
NIKE TRAINING TOP**



EQUALLY SMART T-SHIRT

AND MATCHING SHORTS

PUMA SWEAT-'BOTTOMS'



98 LIVERPOOL STRIP





ITALY '98



JAMAICA '98



S. AFRICA '98

PUMA GENERIC



LUSH NIKE EFFORT



REEBOK SWEAT-JACKET



KIT

LIVERPOOL TRAINING 'T'

MORE WARM SLIP-ONS

AND SOME MORE



LIVERPOOL TRAINING JACKET

SIMILAR PUMA EFFORT

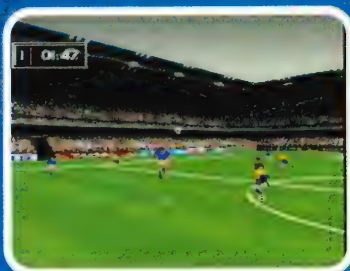


Official UK Playstation Football Special

TOP SECRET

For every game without a set of fancy, foolish cheats there are tons with them. Here's every available cheat for every PlayStation football game.

FIFA SOCCER '96



Primary codes:

Start a game, pause it and press Select to enter the Options screen then type in the below cheats to activate them. You'll hear a clicking noise if they're going to work. Then exit the Options mode and press SQUARE to display the Secret Options menu. Press Left or Right to change the settings. If an option is grayed-out, it requires a second code. Remember, a new game must be started to enable the selected options.

Invisible walls Cross, Cross, Cross, Triangle, Square, Square, Square, Triangle.

Curve ball Triangle, Square, Cross, Triangle, Cross, Cross.

Crazy ball Cross, Square, Triangle, Cross, Cross, Triangle, Square, Cross.

Super power Triangle, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle.

Super goalie Square, Square, Square, Square, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle.

Super offence Square, Square, Square, Square, Square, Triangle, Cross.

Super defence Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Cross, Triangle.

Shootout Square, Triangle, Square, Cross, Square, Triangle.

Stupid team Square, Triangle, Cross, Square, Triangle, Cross.

Dream team Square, Square, Triangle, Triangle,



Cross, Cross, Square, Square.

Secondary codes:

Follow the normal code procedure until you hear the click then exit the Options menu, and quit the game. Now go to the Options screen and press Square to



bring up the Secret Options menu. Start a new game to enable the selected options.

Formal (players wear tuxedos) Square, Triangle, Cross, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Cross, Triangle.

Federation (Spock and Data as players) Square, Triangle, Cross, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Cross, Cross.

Dynamic Duo (Batman and Robin as players) Square, Triangle, Cross, Square, Triangle, Triangle,

Triangle, Square.

Oktoberfest Square, Triangle, Cross, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle.

Invisible (only hair, shorts, shoes and numbers visible) Square, Triangle, Cross, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Cross, Square.

EA custom teams Square, Triangle, Cross, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Square, Square.

FIFA '98



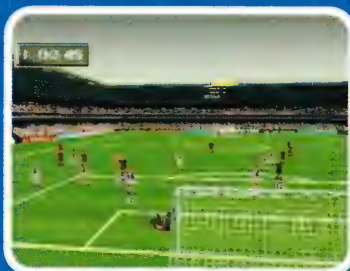
To boost all your players' attributes to 99 enter L1, L2, Cross, Square, Cross at the Player Edit screen.

To boost your bank balance so you can create a dream team go to the Customise Squad option and select the Team Edit option. From here press Square, Cross, Square, L2, L1 to give you as much money as you could ever wish for.

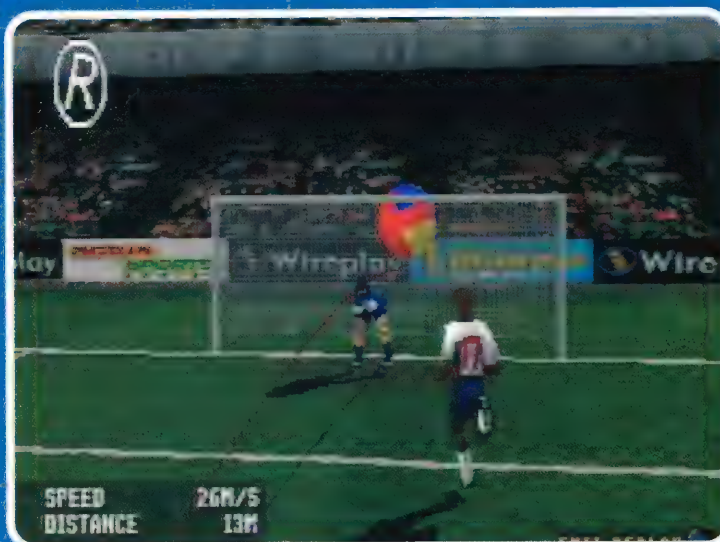
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER

There aren't too many cheats for this football/fighting game but the few that there are, are pretty good.

Dream team Hold L2 + R2 + Square + Cross at the Team Select screen.



Cheats



To change the male commentator's voice to a woman's, go to the Options screen midway through an arcade game and then go to the Audio option. Choose the Commentator option then press and hold Circle+ Square to switch to a female voice.

ACTUA SOCCER 2

To activate these codes enter them at the Title screen. A message on the screen will tell you if you've been successful.

Gremlin 11 team Left, Right, Square, Circle, Up, Down, Square, Circle.

Invisible players Square, Circle, Down, Circle, Up, Right, Square, Left.

Large players Up, Down, Down, Right, Square, Square, Circle, Circle.

Small players Circle, Down, Down, Square, Up, Up, Left, Right.

Play with beach ball Left, Right, Left, Up, Left, Right, Square, Square.

Super furry animals Left, Left, Square, Right, Right,



Circle, Up, Down

Ghostball Square, Square, Left, Left, Right, Right, Circle, Circle.

No floodlights Left, Left, Left, Circle, Right, Right, Right, Square.

Monochrome Up, Down, Up, Square, Circle, Up, Down, Up.

THREE LIONS

WORLD

LEAGUE SOCCER



If you, like us, think the names given to the players in the default version of WLS are pretty stupid then you'll be pleased to hear about a new cheat which miraculously changes the players' names into the real ones. To activate it go through the Game Options menu and scroll down until you get to the Player Edit one. Select this and select an English side, then choose any team and replace a player's name with the phrase TEAM.TWO. Once this is entered you'll have the option to select Default 2 team names. Do this to change all the silly names into the (far more sensible) real ones. And finally, don't forget to save the changes to memory card. If you follow this correctly you'll be able to select the proper names whenever you want.



PLAYER MANAGER

For such a popular game (it's sold more than 50,000 copies in the UK alone!) it's a surprise that there's only one cheat for it. If promotion is getting close and you don't want to risk your players doing the business go to the Press Office and click on the light bulb 100 (yes, one hundred) times. Once done you should go to the matchday and decide what score you want to win by – just don't make it stupid, no Man Utd vs Barnsley scores.



To get some special teams just enter the desired code at the Team Selection screen and wait for the sound to confirm the entry. Then cycle through the continents until you get to the secret team.

England 1966 team L1, L1, L1, Right.

Brazil 1970 team R1, R1, R1, Right.

Die Mannschaft team R2, R2, R2, Right.

All-Time team L2, L2, L2, Right.



QUIZ

Here's a little quiz to see how much you know about your football and, more importantly, your PlayStation. To make things as fair as possible we've split the questions directly down the middle. There's nothing to win but there's a hell of a lot of pride to be gained by getting top marks. Honest.

ROUND ONE.

Before we get started properly let's get the ball rolling with some general football questions. There are some easy ones and some that aren't so easy - Best Of British and away we go.

- 1 Which midland team plays around the corner from one of Britain's most secure prisons?
- 2 A lot of teams have a Kop stand but where does the phrase originate?
- 3 Name the former Liverpool player who developed the Predator boot for Adidas?
- 4 Which team won the French championship for the first time last year?
- 5 Who was the first American to score a goal in a Wembley final?
- 6 Which football team used to have a cricket ground on the edge of their Yorkshire-based football ground?
- 7 What was the nationality of the linesman who controversially awarded the third England goal in the 1966 World Cup?
- 8 Name the Coventry striker who scored against England in the first round of the World Cup.
- 9 Don Revie was the manager who brought success to which northern club in the 1970s?

- 10 Which country hosted the European Championships in 1992 and which two countries are set to host the tournament in 2000?

ROUND THREE

To finish off the football side to the quiz here are ten tricky questions to test your knowledge of football; some are easy and others more difficult.

- 1 Which oriental side did Arsène Wenger manage before returning to Europe to take the Arsenal job?
- 2 Name two other clubs managed by Alex Ferguson before he guided Manchester United to success?
- 3 Who is the most expensive defender in the Premier League?
- 4 How many managers did Sheffield Wednesday have last season?
- 5 Which team avoided relegation on the last day of the season for the second season in a row?
- 6 Which team finished higher, Newcastle or Wimbledon?
- 7 Which England player used to hold the world record for the highest number of international caps?
- 8 And what nationality is the player who broke the record?
- 9 Which football ground has a McDonalds as part of their famous main stand?
- 10 What was special about the three teams that were relegated to the Nationwide league last season?

ROUND FOUR.

Right, now we've checked your football knowledge we want to see just how clever you are when it comes to PlayStation games. To get you started here are ten general knowledge questions.

- 1 What was Lara Croft looking for in *Tomb Raider 2*?
- 2 Name the three *Star Wars* games available for the PlayStation.
- 3 What are the names of the two virus' responsible for the horrendous mutations in the *Resident Evil* games?
- 4 Eddy, one of the new fighters in *Tekken 3*, uses a dance-like, Brazilian martial art but what is it called?
- 5 How much Ram memory does the PlayStation have?
- 6 What type of lizard is Sony's new character *Spyro*?
- 7 Which development team brought us the *Crash Bandicoot* games?
- 8 What is the name of the Japanese feller that Sony like to call the 'Father of the PlayStation'?
- 9 What is the name given to the Japanese version of *Point Blank*?
- 10 Which was the first *FIFA* game to feature their Virtual Stadium system?

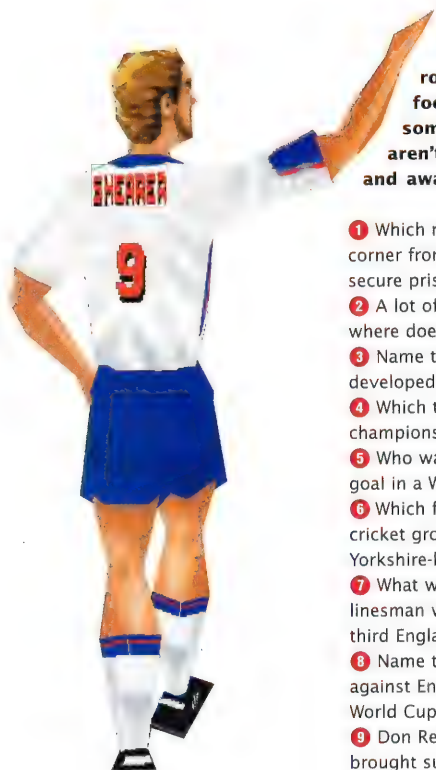
ROUND FIVE.

Below are the names of ten famous footballing folk; some are players and some are commentators but all have lent their talents to various PlayStation football games at one time or another. All you have to do now is tell us which game they each contributed to.

- 1 Alan Shearer
- 2 Michael Owen
- 3 Les Ferdinand
- 4 David Ginola
- 5 Simon Tracey
- 6 Barry Davies
- 7 Brian Moore
- 8 Chris Waddle
- 9 John Motson
- 10 Peter Brackley

THE FINAL ROUND.

Now we're going to see just how much attention you've paid to the rest of the magazine. Over the next ten questions there are pictures taken from

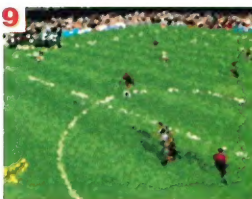
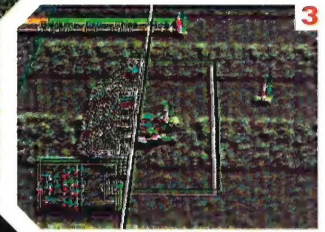
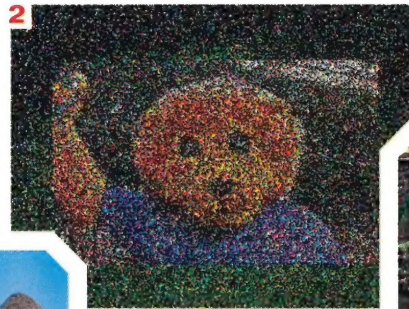


ROUND TWO

So you think you know your Premiership footballers do you? Below are ten teams and shirt numbers, so see if you can work out which famous player dons which shirt at 3:00pm on a Saturday afternoon.

MANCHESTER UNITED 7	LIVERPOOL 9	LEICESTER 5	DERBY COUNTY 6	NEWCASTLE 12
1	2	3	4	5
SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 11	ARSENAL 17	TOTTENHAM 9	COVENTRY 9	CHELSEA 20
6	7	8	9	10

ten top PlayStation footy games. Now it would be easy if all we did was chuck in ten screenshots so we've decided to make it much trickier than that. What you have below are ten shots which we've given to our art bods, along with a free reign to make them look as weird as possible.



HOW DID YOU DO?

0-10 Barnsley – not really your scene is it, this Premier League malarkey? Go straight to the Nationwide league, don't pass go and certainly don't collect £200.

11-20 Everton – not a disaster as such but do you really think

this is good enough? Go and have a word with the chairman; he might disagree.

21-30 Sheffield Wednesday – ah, the safety of mid-table mediocrity. Not a bad place by any means but the fans will need more effort if you're going to do better next season.

31-40 Leicester City – top half of the table. Keep this up and you'll be looking to Europe next time around.

41-50 Leeds United – not quite there, this time you'll have to make do with Europe. Don't worry though, there's always next year.

51-60 Arsenal – this is without doubt the finest performance we've seen around these parts for a very long time. Give yourself a pat on the back. Although, given your terrifying collection of footy facts, perhaps you could be boring, boring Arsenal.



ANSWERS

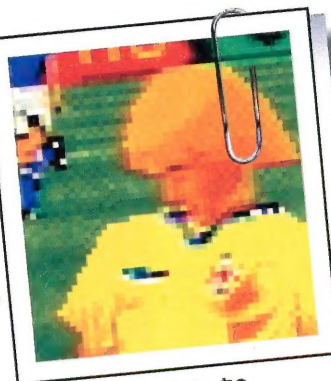
- THE FINAL ROUND**
- 10 World League Soccer
 - 9 FIFA Soccer '96
 - 8 World Cup '98
 - 7 Adidas Power Soccer '98
 - 6 Premier Manager '98
 - 5 FIFA: Road to the World Cup '98
 - 4 Adidas Power Soccer '98
 - 3 Kick Off '97
 - 2 Striker '96
 - 1 Actua Soccer 1
- ROUND FIVE**
- 1 Premier Manager '98
 - 2 Actua Soccer 2
 - 3 World League Soccer
 - 4 FIFA: Road to the World Cup '98
 - 5 Actua Soccer 2
 - 6 Adidas Power Soccer '98
 - 7 Adidas Power Soccer '98
 - 8 Actua Soccer series
 - 9 ISS Pro

- ROUND FOUR**
- 1 The Dagger of Xian
 - 2 Rebel Assault 2, Dark Forces
 - 3 Masters of Teras Kasi
 - 4 The G and T virus
 - 5 Capolita
- ROUND THREE**
- 1 Japp Stam
 - 2 Aberdeen and Scotland
 - 3 Crampus 8
 - 4 Frank Sinclair
 - 5 Dion Dubin
 - 6 Les Ferdinand
 - 7 Emmanuel Petit
 - 8 Paulo Di Canio
 - 9 Stuart Pearce
 - 10 Igor Stimac

- ROUND ONE**
- 1 Leicester City
 - 2 It's Afrikaan for hill
 - 3 Craig Johnston
 - 4 Lens
 - 5 John Harkes for Sheffield Wednesday
 - 6 Sheffield United
 - 7 Russian
 - 8 Viorol Molodvan
 - 9 Leeds United
 - 10 Sweden in 1992 and Holland

JUST THE FAX

CELEBS QUIZZED, DEVELOPERS GRILLED, GAMES EXPLAINED,



Just the facts... well maybe. We persuaded freelance football journo Billy Ollox to track down a foreign signing and he came back with "This Season's Hottest Signing!" Nobby (after Nobby Styles) Fictionado who has been snatched from his home club No'realidad Paraquat to play for up and coming Coldham Albion. Although Nobby regularly turns out for his National squad, The Republic of San Lorenzo, they had to pull out the World Cup preliminary stages due to an unnaturally large banana crop last year which kept all the players in the field all winter along with the subsequent overthrow of the republic's 103-year-old leader General Ricochet in a coup led by his son.

1) You have come from the warmth of San Lorenzo to cooler, though more politically stable climes. What are your feelings about the move?

I happy and glad all time since I arrive and want thank my manager Reginald for my happy dislodgment from The Esteemed Republic of San Lorenzo and Environs. I never so happy and the people of Coldham so pleasing and nice: all the women here they so beautiful and friendly and have so many heavy clothes and the men they smoke so well. Really, I never seen such heavy clothes and smoking in my whole life.

2) I hear from your agent that you may well be working in the videogame scene and working with motion-capture for a number of software houses... tell us about that?

Oh yes! It is obvious that my first and greatest loyalty is to my most esteemed and incredible club after my loyalty to my Republic and wife and lovely children... But yes in answer to your question it is most true that I am looking to work in the field of videogame and not the field of banana. Excuse me, for this is my joke. No, really - this is such an excitement of mine. You must understand that this is all virgin to me, at home our entertainment is mostly football and banana so this, this... I must translate 'small men on the box that what you are to must control with the aid of the God of fire' is yes... virgin. Also, if I prove most successful then I am want to move out from the prestigious VMCA in where I am live and onto the council list.

3) What is it that you think you can add to the genre of football games. Particularly your 'signature manoeuvre'?

Genre yes! This is another of the words which make me so happy that you use. I read this magazine of yours and you so not afraid to use this word at the drop of a pin. I am famous, most famous, in my country for my banana Kick which I named, as you might well have got there before me, after the banana. This is not like a Brazilian who is most often do this in 1970 where the ball she just bend in the mid-air. Oh no! My banana Kick is to leap on the ball at an angle, with both feet and such a tremendous pressure that the ball she no bear it and fly like a bullet of liberation straight out - in a manner that many find most confusing. This is what my manager has already named a speciality indigenous to me and myself.

4) Didn't this move get you sent off the training pitch after snapping the legs of Coldham's star striker Alan Owen, in what the Coldham Chronicle labelled 'the most cynically late challenge imaginable'?

Ah, now you all must turn so nasty, you English and your constant hoity toity and yes sir, no sir. First you tug forelocks at me and soon after I happen here you snub your noses which I cut off to spite your face. Oh! you think you are the hard men but I with my homespun philosophy and nonsensical patois. I, I am the real man here, your Alan Owen is, as they say in the most illustrious Coldham, a mandarse.

Nobby Ficionado. Thank you.

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine

FOOTBALL
CONTROLLERS &
MEMORY CARDS
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JOYTECH



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